

AGARTHA PROGRAM



BERSERKER
BOOKS



INTRODUCTION TO SACRED SCIENCE

Agartha Programme



FEDERICO GONZALEZ
and contributors

PRELIMINARY NOTE

This Introduction to Sacred Science, also known as the Agartha Programme, was originally published in 1985 as a distance learning university course; it was subsequently made available on a special website until December of last year (2002). In both cases, it was presented as a discourse with the same characteristics and texts as this one, although from the outset of the course, it was accompanied by practical breathing exercises and other activities that students interested in this teaching were required to carry out progressively.

However, this edition of *♦ *SYMBOLOS*, intended for the general reader, contains only the literary sections that constitute the intellectual – and essential – core of this publication, stripped of the supplementary works that might provide a perhaps more comprehensive understanding of these texts, which in themselves possess a value directly linked to Knowledge, in our opinion, corroborated by many others who have had the opportunity to follow them through study and meditation.

It is, therefore, a didactic approach whose structure is my own – as are the vast majority of the sections – and which has evolved from courses I have taught over several years in various cities: Buenos Aires, São Paulo (Brazil), Bogotá, San José (Costa Rica), Mexico City and Barcelona, amongst others.

Later, whilst writing this work, I invited some of the students—now collaborators and friends—who had already been following the teachings presented here for years to contribute on certain topics; their names appear on the cover of this work.

Firstly, I must acknowledge the significance of the brilliant writings on Sacred History penned by Francisco Ariza; likewise, the collaboration of Fernando Trejos and José Manuel Río in the drafting of various texts, their proofreading, and the actual production and dissemination of the text, as well as the rest of the names listed on the frontispiece; and to those who, to this day, teach and learn through this Programme in the various departments of the Centre for the Study of Symbology.

Hoping that our subscribers and readers will find this manual of interest, I extend my warmest congratulations to them.

Federico González

FOREWORD

This Introduction to Sacred Science is a Programme, a teaching method, a step-by-step course which, if followed with faith and concentration, produces the results envisaged by those who created it, for their own experiences in inner work and in the knowledge of the Self are expressed within it. It is a Teaching that requires patience and willpower to develop the energy known as intelligence; this is tantamount to truly wanting to learn to think, for which the training provided by the Programme is necessary. It requires of the student study and dedication and, above all, a commitment to their sensitivity and sound judgement.

Agartha, which is the name of the Programme, is a compendium, a manual, which today translates the Doctrine and Tradition of all peoples and times in the form of the Hermetic Tradition. Its course is specifically designed to promote Knowledge through the effectiveness of its realisation. Its lessons and topics cover the Hermetic vehicles (Alchemy, Arithmosophy, Kabbalah, Astrology, Symbolism, Tarot), as well as Philosophy, Metaphysics, Cosmogony, Mythology, and in particular universal symbols and the liberal arts. It also addresses Art as a way of seeing (poetry, literature, music, theatre, dance, architecture, visual arts), (Sacred) History and (Authentic) Science. This method, or rather, this medium, also includes diagrams and engravings; the visual plays a role in it.

As can be seen, the rhythmic, periodic, cyclical and harmonious interweaving of these themes produces a series of interrelationships, which compels us to establish unexpected links between them; these links complement one another and broaden and illuminate our surroundings, whilst awakening our consciousness. That is why those who take part in this teaching are confident of achieving positive results with people who are interested in discovering the mysteries that each of us carries within ourselves and which we also observe in the world.

This transmission of key ideas and Knowledge unites the members of the Agartha Programme—men and women of many nationalities, people living in different countries who do not know one another, yet who work together through that invisible bond described in this manual.

We are not a sect, nor do we perform ceremonies, nor are we organised in

pseudo-religious or any other manner, but we believe that, given the dark times in which we find ourselves, this Introduction to Sacred Science currently fulfils a transcendent function related to the rebirth of the values lying dormant within contemporary humanity. We, as human beings today, function using only a tiny fraction of the potential granted to humankind. We therefore lead a life that falls short of our true potential. The purpose of this Introduction is to reclaim these individual potentials—now practically forgotten—with a particular emphasis on the regeneration of the self. This yields a more harmonious world, worthy of being lived as it was originally offered to humankind in the freedom of its nature, yet which remains unknown amidst the turmoil of daily existence.

You have connected with Agartha and now have the opportunity to begin a new, entirely different phase, and to discover a wonderful world, unfortunately almost entirely unknown to the majority of those around us. You are entering into communication with Sacred Science and, through it, with the energy-force that constitutes it, whose emanations have made possible the realisation of Masters, Instructors and Initiates throughout all times and places. You can achieve something incredible within yourself, even if at this moment you do not see it clearly or do not possess the elements and the method to carry it out. Sacred Science is the bridge between the reality we already know and another, unknown reality, in the face of which even our wildest imaginings fall short. This Programme is revolutionary because it proposes a transformation, a genuine inner transmutation that makes possible the awakening of the dormant potentialities of the True Man.

This new learning must be gradual and methodical. The seeker will embark on a journey and take part in a process that will be reflected in themselves and in the people and things around them in an almost magical way. The mysterious world of symbols will be our guide on this gradual journey, and they will also manifest themselves in our thoughts and in the actions and events of our daily lives, enabling us to experience a richer, happier and more wondrous world—one that every man or woman, regardless of age, race or status, can attain, for it is a matter of discovering what lies within, even if they are unaware of it or merely suspect its existence. To this end, we shall make use of the fundamental symbols of Sacred Art and Science as bequeathed to us by the Hermetic Tradition, with the advantage that these vehicles can be learnt without the need to alter the rhythm of daily life.

As already mentioned, some of the methods and means employed by this Programme to convey the Teaching and Knowledge of the other reality to which we aspire are: Kabbalah, Arithmosophy, Alchemy, Astrology, Cosmogony, Metaphysics, Theurgy, etc. Likewise, special emphasis is placed on that which is linked to the Arts (Music, Dance, Visual Arts, Architecture, Literature, etc.) as a form of Knowledge and regarded as a suitable vehicle for the contemplation of Beauty. Equally, there is an emphasis on a reorientation with regard to the modern sciences. All this generates another dimension of space and time which, nevertheless, is occurring here and now in the deepest recesses of the human heart; that which constitutes one's authentic Self, one's Identity, the alpha and omega of these studies and works.

To this end, the reader is provided with a theoretical grounding, alternating between the various disciplines gradually and in an analogical order. Meditation on the texts is particularly recommended, as we believe they are capable of acting

as catalysts for the awakening of our dormant consciousness. A drop of water wears away the stone.

This Introduction to Sacred Science synthesises an enormous body of hermetic literature that corresponds to the voice of Wisdom across all times and geographical spaces, embodied in Masters who guide and underpin the Teachings of Agartha. The Programme also acts as a form of therapy – ordering our psyche and giving meaning to our lives – for all those who open themselves to its understanding and work towards its realisation.

Growth is an opportunity and a right that all human beings possess. If everything lies in the mind and heart of man, it is very important that he recognises his own nature and acts in accordance with it. At his level, there is nothing more important than man himself. And by knowing his infinite possibilities, as well as his limitations, he will be able to find peace for himself, joy in his work and general happiness.

We wish to recall here some fundamental notions regarding Initiation:

- “All knowledge is essentially an identification.”
- “This knowledge is only possible because the being who is a human individual in a certain contingent state of manifestation is also something else at the same time.”
- “All knowledge that can truly be called initiatory results from a consciously established communication with the higher states [of being].”
- "Direct knowledge of the transcendent order, with the absolute certainty it entails, is, of course, in itself incommunicable and inexpressible; any expression, being necessarily formal by very definition, and consequently individual, is therefore inadequate to it and can offer of it (...) nothing more than a reflection within the human order".
- "All knowledge that is exclusively 'bookish' has nothing in common with initiatory knowledge, even when considered in its purely theoretical state."

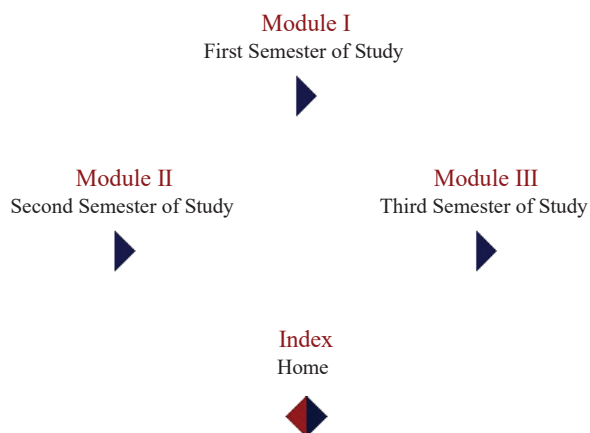
Mentioning as one of the conditions thereof:

- "The inner work through which this development will be gradually realised, if necessary with the aid of external 'assistants' or 'supports', especially in the early stages, leading the being, step by step, through the different states of the initiatory hierarchy, to guide them towards the final goal of 'Liberation' or 'Supreme Identity'."

The purpose of the Programme is to spiritualise matter and materialise the spirit. The course comprises three modules, each lasting one semester, corresponding to three degrees or levels of study; however, the structure of the manual is cyclical, and once the linear study of it has been completed – which must at the same time be orderly and rhythmic, to avoid 'consuming' it – it can be read in different ways, since the texts also admit various readings (including a circular one) according to

the needs of different individuals, or the various cycles they are going through.

Note: Due to the very 'virtual' nature of the medium through which this Teaching is disseminated, it is recommended that these texts be printed on paper, which will facilitate their study and the necessary concentration and meditation.



INTRODUCTION TO SACRED SCIENCE

Agartha Programme

MODULE I

1 THE HERMETIC TRADITION

The eternal truths, unanimously recognised and expressed by sages of all times and places, took shape in the West through the thought of closely interrelated cultures that flourished at various times in regions situated between the Middle East and Europe, during this fourth and final part of the cycle, known as *the Kali Yuga* or Iron Age, and which has always been associated with the West.

Ancient knowledge, the heritage of the Unanimous Tradition, was revealed to the Egyptian, Persian and Chaldean sages. They made use of mythology and ritual, the study of musical harmony, the stars, sacred mathematics and geometry, and various initiatory vehicles that grant access to the Mysteries, to recreate the Perennial Philosophy by designing and constructing a *body* of ideas that has been the seed of Western metaphysical thought known as the Hermetic Tradition, the Western branch of the Primordial Tradition. Hermes Trismegistus, the Thrice-Great One, gives his name to this tradition. In truth, Hermes is the Greek name of an invisible archetypal being known to all peoples and named in various ways. He is an intermediary spirit between the gods and men, an instructing and educating deity, a divine healer who reveals his messages to every true initiate: he who has passed through death and conquered it.

The Egyptians called this initiating entity Thoth, who transmitted the eternal teachings to his hierophants, alchemists, mathematicians and builders, who, with the aid of complex cosmogonic rituals, undertook the adventure of crossing the waters leading to the homeland of the immortals.

Hermetic authors have linked Hermes with Enoch and Elijah, who, for the Hebrews, would be the human incarnation of this superhuman entity whom they identify with Raphael, the archangel who is also a guide, healer and revealer. This Jewish tradition, which has always been regarded as an integral part of the Hermetic Tradition, coexisted with the Egyptian tradition before and during the captivity – Moses is the fruit of this coexistence – and in the time of Kings David and Solomon during the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem; around three thousand years ago, these ideas took shape in a revealed architecture that once again allowed for the creation of an empty space or inner ark capable of harbouring the divine within its bosom.

In the 6th century BC, the same century as the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, and contemporary with Lao Tzu in China, Gautama Buddha in India, and the prophet Daniel in Babylon, the Pythagorean school was founded; this school, also an heir to the ancient mysteries revealed by

Hermes, would later enlighten Greek culture, influencing both the pre-Socratics and Socrates and Plato. This Hermetic thought had a notable influence on Roman culture, on the early Christians and Alexandrian Gnostics, on the knights, builders and alchemists of medieval Europe, and on Renaissance philosophers and artists, whilst at the same time drawing upon Kabbalistic knowledge and Islamic esotericism.

These Hermetic-initiatory ideas subsequently flourished in the Rosicrucian movement that developed in Germany and in Elizabethan England, these ancient teachings having been later enshrined in Freemasonry. This Order, which in its exoteric appearance has been unable to escape the degradation and dissolution promoted by modern humanity, nevertheless preserves within its rites and symbols that revealed and revealing seed, active within a few lodges that have managed to escape the innovative fashions threatening the West with collapse, and maintains that regenerative link with the invisible axis of Tradition that always points towards the true North, the origin and destiny of humanity, from which this tradition has never strayed.

Hermes and the Hermetic Tradition are alive today. Their presence is eternal.

2 THE EXOTERIC AND THE ESOTERIC

All sacred symbols, whether expressed by nature or acquired by humankind through divine revelation, be they gestural, visual or auditory, numerical, geometric or astronomical, ritual or mythological, macro- or microcosmic, have a hidden and an apparent aspect; an intrinsic quality and a perceptible manifestation, that is to say, an esoteric aspect and an exoteric one.

Whilst the profane man – who is such by virtue of his fallen state – can perceive only the outward appearance of the symbol, having lost the connection with its mythical origin and spiritual reality, the initiate, on the other hand, seeks to discover in it the most essential, that which lies at its inner core, that which is not perceptible but is intelligible and knowable, the invisible structure of the cosmos and of thought, its eternal fabric, that is to say, the esoteric, which also constitutes the deepest being of man himself, his immortal nature.

By making contact with and identifying with that higher condition of himself and of the Whole, he realises that signs and symbolic structures which are apparently diverse are nevertheless identical in meaning and origin; that the same thought or idea can be expressed in different languages and guises without its unique and essential content being altered in any way; that universal and eternal ideas cannot vary, even though they may appear to manifest themselves in ever-changing ways.

The cosmos, the entire creation, contains a hidden face: its invisible and mysterious structure which makes it possible and which is its esoteric reality, but which, upon manifesting itself, is reflected in myriad beings of the most varied forms, giving it an exoteric face, its temporal and mutable appearance. The same is true of man: the body and individual circumstances are

what constitute his exoteric and apparent aspect, whilst the spirit is the most esoteric, the only Real, his deepest origin and his highest destiny.

Whilst the five human senses are capable of revealing the physical, the sensible reality, that sixth sense of intelligent intuition and the inner vision acquired through Initiation into the Mysteries allows one to See beyond; it grants access to a metaphysical realm in which beings and things are no longer subject to becoming nor marked by death. This esoteric vision identifies man with the Self, that is to say, with his true Being, his immortal essence, of which he becomes aware through Knowledge and the remembrance of the Self.

Whilst the exoteric shows us the manifold and the changing, the esoteric leads us towards the one and the unchanging.

With an esoteric perspective, which will gradually unfold along our inner path, we shall come to understand and realise that the spirit of the Father, his innermost Being, is identical to the spirit of the Son. This awareness of Unity is the goal of all esoteric and initiatory work, properly understood. All our efforts are directed towards it; in it we place our thoughts and our inner concentration.

3

THE SYMBOLIC PATH

The symbol is the visible trace (or gesture) of an invisible or hidden reality. It is the manifestation of an idea that is thus expressed on the sensory level and made accessible to understanding. In a broad sense, all manifestation, all creation, is symbolic, just as every gesture is a rite, whether this is evident or not, for it constitutes a meaningful sign.

The symbol names things and is one with them; it neither interprets nor defines them. In truth, definition is a Western and modern concept (though it originated in classical Greece) and could be regarded as the gateway to subsequent classification.

The symbol is not merely visual; it can be auditory, as in the case of myth and legend, or entirely plastic and almost imperceptible, as with certain fleeting images that nevertheless leave a mark on us. In the present day, it is usually associated more with the visual, because sight fixes and crystallises images in relation to these historical moments of solidification and stagnation, which are more closely linked to the spatial than to the temporal.

The symbol is the intermediary between two realities, one known and the other unknown, and therefore the vehicle in the search for the Self, through Knowledge. Hence, the various sacred symbols of different traditions – and indeed natural symbols too – intertwine and interconnect, forming a Symbolic Path towards inner realisation, namely: towards Knowledge, that is, the Self, given the identity between what man is and what he knows. The same applies to the rites promoted in this manual, beginning with study and meditation. That is why it is necessary for the reader to have a sufficiently clear understanding of cosmogony—the architecture of the universe reproduced in man—in order to

use the model of the Tree of Life, also known as *the Sephirotic Tree*, to situate oneself within it and transcend it, through the acceptance of an Order capable of showing us what lies beyond it. We are referring to the mobilisation of our entire being that symbols, as intermediaries, seek to achieve; to the journey or navigation through the subtle intricacies of consciousness; to the surprise of perceiving new worlds that remained invisible and yet are familiar to us—all these events marking the magical process of Initiation, characterised by the degrees of Knowledge of other spatiotemporal realities, or rather, another way of perceiving reality.

The metaphysical, that unknown and mysterious realm, manifests itself in the sensible world through the mediation of the symbol. Thanks to this, Knowledge is made possible for human beings; images and symbols allow us to become aware of the world around us, of what it signifies, and of ourselves.

Sacred, revealed symbols have been entrusted to all true traditions. The sages of different peoples, through Science and Art, have always promoted knowledge of those subtle worlds to which the symbols themselves bear witness. They allow those higher realities to touch our senses and enable man, starting from this sensory foundation, to rise to those regions that constitute his innermost aspect: his true self.

The symbolic path proposed by this Programme, with all the experiences it entails, can lead us in an orderly and gradual manner towards that Knowledge.

The symbol embodies a force, an invisible energy, an idea. What it expresses and what it contains within correspond in perfect harmony. It must never be confused with allegory, as the latter is more closely associated with substitutions and assumptions and therefore lacks a clear connection to the inner and true. It is also important to note that the symbols to which we refer are not mere conventions invented by men; they are 'non-human', found in the very structure of the cosmos and the human being. As intermediaries between the invisible and the visible, they foster awareness of higher worlds and supra-cosmic regions.

It is highly remarkable that the principal symbols recur uniformly among all peoples of the earth at different times and in different places. Often this identity is formal, although, as has already been said, we frequently find symbols of different form but identical meaning. In any case, they all correspond to a single, universal archetype from which each of these peoples has drawn its particular symbols.

Sacred symbols are capable of revealing that unique model, its Creator, and even the uncreated; yet at the same time they veil these higher realities and clothe themselves in a formal guise, whilst always preserving their inner and invisible aspect.

Numbers possess a magical-theurgical reality, which we modern people have forgotten, and which we shall endeavour to recover. They are harmonic modules and measures that connect the microcosm (man) with the macrocosm (the universe), and respond to secret vibrations, which find their correspondences in all things. From world events to local and individual occurrences, all form part of the universal harmony, which is also expressed through numbers and measures, resembling a great symphony. Hence the connection with music, and particularly with rhythms and cycles.

Therefore, numbers are a universal language known to all peoples, which has always been regarded as a revealed symbol, capable of synthesising and ordering the universe, and as a magnificent vehicle suited to establishing relationships between things, interweaving the varied orders of existence and the tiered worlds or planes of reality.

Although modern society seems to believe that numbers are a human invention, a product of progress, very useful for making statistical calculations, as well as for measuring, classifying and generally counting objects of all kinds, perceiving the numerical series as an indefinite and horizontal succession – in a single dimension – utterly devoid of any other meaning, in traditional societies, on the contrary, numbers are conceived as ordering deities, as intermediaries, bearers of energies and higher Ideas which they themselves embody throughout the entire cosmos.

Numbers correspond precisely to geometric figures and musical notes, as we have said, in perfect harmony with the laws of astrology and the order of the universe.

The journey numbers take from one to ten (from the almost unmanifest to manifestation) will teach us how to embark on the path of return, starting from physical reality, in search of metaphysical Unity.

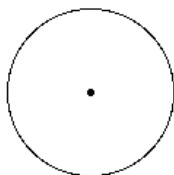
The number, like all symbols, can be viewed from two perspectives: external and internal. From the external perspective, numerical symbols merely express quantities; from the internal perspective, they manifest rather the qualities of being. Our Programme will emphasise the qualitative view, which is the primary one, since from our perspective the quantitative is secondary and derived from the qualitative.

This esoteric view of Numerology was transmitted to the West through the Pythagorean School, although it is also found in all cultures linked to the Primordial Tradition.

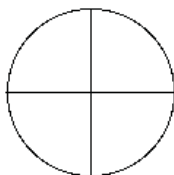
According to the Pythagoreans, all things are synthesised in the first nine numbers; these, in turn, can be summarised in the first three; and they are contained within the One.

The numerical and geometric exercises we suggest promote a process of synthesis, always in the quest for the unity of ourselves; the unity of the cosmos; the Unity of Being.

Of all the fundamental symbols common to all peoples, the circle is undoubtedly the most widespread and the one that appears most frequently in all known human expressions. This is due, in fact, to the very nature of what the circular form signifies. For everything in life and in the world tends to follow this movement, present in both natural and human expressions. In fact, a straight line, or a sequence of points, progressing indefinitely, describes a circular movement that the curvature of space would cause to return to its point of origin. Energy radiations expand in the form of circles, and these whirls or spirals form the structures of heaven and earth, as can be clearly observed in the celestial and molecular realms. The circle, together with its associated symbols, is thus one of the basic images of symbolic knowledge, and we shall return to this subject time and again.



It can be seen in the preceding figure that there is no circumference without an inner point that generates it, for it derives its shape—whether we draw it with a compass or a string—from a pre-existing centre. Together, circumference and centre constitute circularity. The centre is generally invisible, or implied, or is at other times specifically indicated as a constituent element. It is this original point that emanates its energy to all points on the circumference, which are a reflection of its potentiality on a defined and limited plane. These emanations are represented as radiations from the centre and forms of connection between it and the periphery. The simplest and most notable of these representations is the following:



This is also the symbol of the quaternary, that is, of the fourfold manner in which all manifestation occurs. The clearest examples of this division are the four cardinal points in space, the

four seasons of the day or the year in time, the interaction of the elements which, in changing order, constitute matter, the four stages of a human being's life, etc. In other words, this number characterises all creation.

The cross is thus the symbol of the number four in its dynamic and generative aspect, which receives its original energy from the central quintessence, from the point that is the source of the radiation, and to which it must necessarily return in a curved space.

Notes:

a) The circle should also be considered as a sphere. That is to say, we must add volume, or three-dimensionality, to the flat symbolic figures with which we will be working.

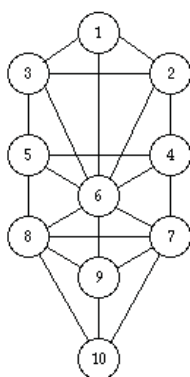
b) The symbols should not be regarded as external to us, for we must bear in mind that the sphere of the universe envelops us. We are within it; we are one with it.

6

KABBALAH

Little by little we shall develop various hermetic methods, including that of Jewish Kabbalah, also used by Christians from the Renaissance onwards. 'Kabbalah' literally means 'Tradition', and refers both to the legacy of the doctrine revealed to the ancient patriarchs and prophets of the Jewish people, and to the reception and revitalisation of that doctrine which stems – like all true Teaching – from the Great Unanimous Tradition.

For now, let us simply say that we will be working specifically with the symbol of the *Sephirotic* Tree of Life. This diagram is a map of the cosmos, a model of the universe, and applies equally to humankind and to all of creation.



The centres and currents of energy that make up this diagram are related to sacred numbers and letters, astrology, alchemy (or the art of transmutation), the cards of the Tarot deck, the symbolism of music, and geometry—all of which are manifestations of the harmonious construction of the inner mansion. This model is therefore a *mandala*, a set of symbols, a synthetic intermediary between us and the unknown, through a series of spirits, or deities, which articulate a magical evolutionary path—one known to all the peoples of the world, which formed the foundation of their culture, and which they guarded as their most precious secret. We are referring to the Mysteries of Initiation.

7

MUSIC

It is known that before travelling through the air, sound propagates through the ether; this fifth element, or hermetic quintessence, is the origin of the remaining four. Due to its extreme immaterial rarification, superior to that of fire—with which it is sometimes identified—the ether is the vehicle par excellence of intelligible light and inaudible sound, whose vibratory nature makes all the elements one and the same thing, before diversifying through the senses into the external world. Due to its extreme plasticity, purity, and absolute receptivity, Tradition has also symbolically assimilated this element to water, the universal substance. Hence the seashell, whose shape reminds us of the female *yon*i and the human ear, is the unanimous symbol (like the holy water fonts in Christian churches) of the purifying, productive and ‘generative’ power of this divine supra-element.

The legend that shells are the keepers of the sound of the sea is well known. This propagation occurs in a wave-like form, of which the spiral is the symbol par excellence. We might also note that this symbol is closely linked to the pentagrammatic logarithm of the growth of living beings, which explains the very spiral structure of shells and snails, as well as that of deoxyribonucleic acid which governs the genetic chain, and many other examples which we shall omit for the moment.

Pythagorean medicine attributed to music a therapeutic power par excellence. Alchemy also refers to this when it aligns the musical centres with the subtle centres, and these with the octaves of the human microcosm. Thus we see how music, viewed from a sacred perspective, is much more than it appears. And also that the natures of time and space, of water and fire, indissolubly united in the ether—the source of their life—though fundamentally distinct, meet at a point where, without becoming confused, they merge into a Single and Universal Harmony.

Socrates, speaking through Plato, confirms the Muses as the primary protectors of the art of music, from whom it received its name. As we have already stated, time and space are mutually related through movement, and this is nothing other than the dynamic or rhythmic expression of a harmony whose models are numbers. Rhythm and proportion,

assimilated respectively to time and space, are the metre by which both are reciprocally ordered, forming the living presence of that very harmony which exists equally in heaven and on earth. Geometry itself (*geo* = earth, *metria* = measure), which ideally orders space, is virtually implicit in music as the metrical relationship of its intervals. Harmony, number and movement are thus equivalent and interchangeable terms, insofar as they refer to the same reality, be it the subtle, musical architecture of the cosmos, the rhythm of breathing, the beating of the heart or the alternating rhythm of the day and night.

Man, in particular, perceives the pulsating rhythm of existence more intensely than any other earthly being, which, in a sense, makes him the most capable of reproducing it. The human soul and its intelligence are of a musical nature, for it is they that grasp the subtle relationships between things; the marvellous articulation that holds them all together, with their nuances, in an indivisible whole that is revealed as unity and harmony impose themselves upon our particular chaos.

In man, as in a small instrument in the hands of an invisible musician, as we are told in ancient and Renaissance Hermeticism, all the powers, virtues and rhythms of the universe come together, attuned or in harmony with the nature of his state. However, he is not always aware of this, since his particular tuning is not generally in step with the universal tone.



[Fig. 1](#)

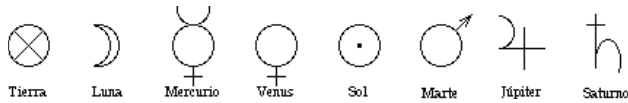
8

ASTRONOMY-ASTROLOGY

We wish to explore the subject of Astrology as a cosmogonic science and a vehicle for self-realisation. We shall begin by examining this eminently symbolic science, as it constitutes one of the most important paths to the spatial and temporal understanding of the reality in which we are embedded.

To this end, with apologies to the many of our readers who have been dealing with this symbolism for many years, we shall begin with something as simple as the names and signs of the seven traditional planets, likened to gods, and their journeys through the celestial space, limited only by

the zodiacal belt.



The same applies to the names and signs of the zodiac:



The seven planets symbolically revolve around the Sun, with Venus, Mercury, the Moon and Earth being inner planets, and the highest ones—Mars, Jupiter and Saturn—being outer planets.

The word ‘Zodiac’, which can be translated as ‘Wheel of Life’ (or ‘Animal Wheel’), refers to the sequence of the twelve constellations situated on either side of the ecliptic, that is, the imaginary curved plane along which the Sun traverses the entire celestial sphere in the course of a year.

In their paths, the stars trace forms directly linked to the fate of the Earth and its inhabitants, mankind, active members of the system. These conditions mark us and help us to understand our limits, determined first and foremost by the place and time of our birth, and from these limits we may choose the unlimited as the foundation of all true order.

Since the dawn of time, the stars have traced in the sky a contrapuntal and harmonious dance of forms and rhythms that are comprehensible to human beings, who, immersed in the chaos of ever-changing motion, take these patterns as the most fixed and stable elements amidst the constant passing of nights and days, which tends to dissolve into a meaningless amorphous whole. These patterns shape our lives, just as the culture into which we are born, subject to historical development and geographical circumstances, is not immune to the subtle influence of planets and stars. It is not merely a matter of knowing the map of the sky as an introduction to understanding Cosmogony, but also of considering the importance these have in our individual lives and in relation to their integration into the macrocosm, without falling into merely egotistical or simplistic approaches, but rather with the aim of finding in the planets and the zodiac points of reference to reconcile the psychic energies of our personality, balancing them in such a way that the study of Astrology becomes a valuable aid to the Process of Knowledge (grounded in the experience that the stars and their movements produce in the individual being and their existence) and can be

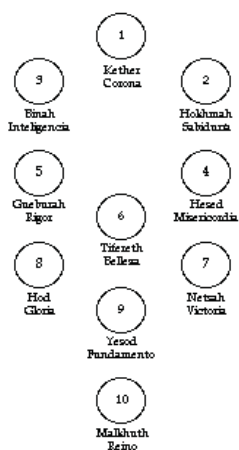
managed in accordance with the benefic and malefic patterns that their own dual energy-force manifests within the cosmic whole.

Note: We shall use the seven traditional planets of Antiquity, excluding the modern ones: Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. We have already provided the symbols and names so that the aspirant may familiarise themselves with them and learn them.

9

KABBALAH

Below we present once again the *Sephirotic* Tree of Life, to which we have added the name of each of the *Sephiroth* or ‘numerations’, that is, of the ten circles (spheres in three-dimensional terms) or ‘numbers’ that compose it.



Although for educational purposes we shall divide it into spheres, planes and columns, it is important always to remember that this Tree constitutes an indissoluble and indivisible unity, and that all its parts are inseparable aspects of that unity.

The first *sefirah*, *Kether* (a word meaning ‘Crown’), is the single reality, the absolute mystery, the pure essence from which the remaining *sefiroth* emanate.

The second, *Hokhmah*, the first emanation, is the divine Wisdom through which the Deity knows Itself, and enables every being to recognise the Unity within.

The third sphere, *Binah*, Intelligence, is the Great Mother or Universal Womb, the generator of all worlds and beings, which she discerns and shapes only to return them once more to the One. These first three *sefiroth* are in reality one: *Kether* is Knowledge, *Hokhmah* the subject that

knows (active) and *Binah* the known object (passive).

The fourth *sefirah*, *Hesed*, is Grace, Love or Mercy that radiates throughout all creation; the fifth (*Gueburah* or *Din*) is divine Rigor or Judgement that denies all that is not the One; and *Tifereth*, the sixth, is the Beauty that interweaves all the *sefiroth* with one another.

Netzach, the seventh, Victory, is the energy that produces all manifested worlds; and the eighth, *Hod*, Glory, is responsible for reabsorbing these apparent worlds back into Unity; *Yesod*, the ninth, is the Foundation that balances the two preceding ones; and finally *Malkhuth*, the tenth, the Kingdom, constitutes the descent of *Kether* into the material world and represents divine Omnipresence and Immanence in all things.

Each of these *sefiroth* has a hidden aspect and a visible aspect. It is receptive in relation to the one preceding it and active in relation to the one following it.

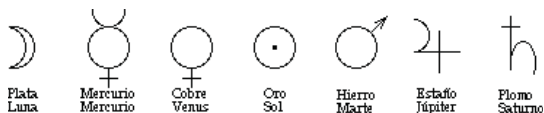
It is important to note that within every *sefirah* a complete *Sephirotic* Tree can be seen, and within every *sefirah* of this Tree another one, and so on down to the infinitely small. Conversely, however large we may imagine any Tree to be, it is merely a *sefirah* of another, larger Tree, which in turn is merely another *sefirah* of an even larger one, also *ad infinitum*, just as the structure of space and time contains worlds within worlds and cycles within cycles, that is, that of an archetypal sphere divided into ten numerations (or small spheres) which reproduce indefinitely.

10

ALCHEMY

Another of the Hermetic arts is Alchemy. This was the name given in Antiquity to the science of the transmutations—mineral or vegetable—of nature. These operations have a counterpart in man, who can see himself in them as in a mirror reflecting his own process of development, and they symbolise the possibility of regeneration. That is to say, the ability to change condition and form to such an extent that the substance with which one works – in this case the human psyche at the earliest levels – becomes something distinct from what we currently know. This search for and discovery of the Self is, in short, true Freedom, untainted by any prejudice, and can be likened to a new birth.

Medieval European alchemy, which deals with the transmutation of metals (and minerals in general), also uses astrological notation to designate the symbolic qualities that distinguish certain metals.



This association between the stars (deities and celestial energies) and metals is by no means arbitrary, for there is a constant correspondence between the high and the low, and the forces and energies of the heavens (Uranian deities) and those of the earth (Chthonic deities) are analogous, although it is essential to note that they are inverted in relation to one another.



Nevertheless, these forces are complementary, and neither the Universe nor man could exist without both, for they constitute the rhythmic dynamic, the dialectic, within which all things come into being. For this reason, alchemical or Hermetic work is carried out with these two energies, harmonising them without excluding either. For, as we shall see, it is man who reconnects them, the true intermediary between heaven and earth. And it is for this very reason that in ancient traditions, Initiation

was and is regarded as a visit by the human being to the bowels of the earth, or a journey to the realm of the dead, if not a descent into the underworlds of our ignorant psyche, essential for a subsequent and triumphant ascent to the heavens. Below are the names of the three alchemical principles and the symbols by which they are represented:

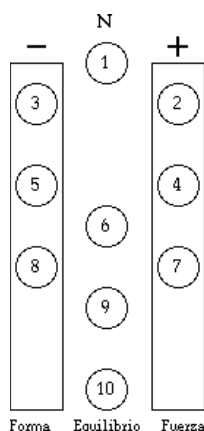


The interaction of these principles and their constant combination produce all things and are therefore present within them. Sulphur is active (+), whilst Mercury is passive (-). Salt, the third principle that binds the preceding ones, may be described as neutral (N). The *Athanor* is the alchemical furnace or retort where these principles are continuously transformed, as are the mineral elements they give rise to, which likewise embody this tripartite division. What occurs within the *Athanor* likewise takes place within the human being, especially within their psyche—the first step in the Hermetic work—where these energies oppose, contradict and unite, giving rise to a permanent dialectic of balances and imbalances that constitute universal harmony. This dynamic is a dialectic in which opposites do not exclude one another but constantly converge in union so that they may separate.

11

KABBALAH

The Tree of Life model, a mirror and synthesis of humanity and the cosmos, is divided into three columns or pillars as follows:

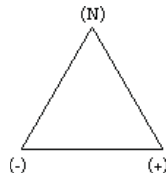


This traditional division into three columns is closely linked to what was previously stated regarding the alchemical Principles. As can be seen, one of the columns is active (+) – or positive, or masculine – and the other is receptive (-) – or passive, or feminine – whilst the third, or central axis, equidistant from both, is neutral and permanently unites them. The Column of Power corresponds to active energy, composed, as we can see, of the *sefiroth Hokhmah* (2), *Hesed* (4) and *Netsah* (7). The Column of Form corresponds to passive energy, which is composed of the *sefiroth Binah* (3), *Gueburah* (5) and *Hod* (8). The central or axial column, consisting of the *sefiroth Kether* (1), *Tifereth* (6), *Yesod* (9) and *Malkhuth* (10), is neutral and perpetually brings about the assimilation of opposites, giving rise to new possibilities for indefinite developments. It is called the pillar or Column of Balance. This is the image of the permanent order of Creation, according to Kabbalah.

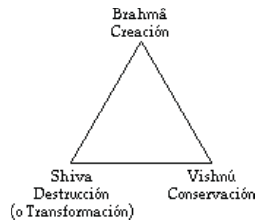
12

THE TRIAD

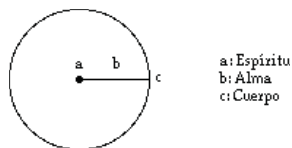
The geometric shape of the equilateral triangle can also symbolise what was previously said about Alchemy and the *Sephirotic* Tree, for every idea manifested by the symbol can be expressed not only through geometric figures and numbers, but also through a rhythm, a gesture or a sound. The Universal Principles, represented by the upper triad of the Tree, are also encapsulated by the shape of the equilateral triangle, as it instantly reveals the energies and forces contained within the Idea, thus revealing to us its knowledge and the indefinite suggestions to which it gives



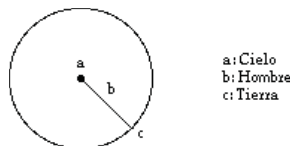
This triangle can equally be transposed to the concepts of Creation, Preservation and Destruction (or rather, Transformation), present in all traditional cosmogonies, for example in the Hindu tradition, where these Principles form the *Trimurti*, manifested by *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*.



In the symbol of the wheel, too, we find a triunity of concepts, expressed as follows:

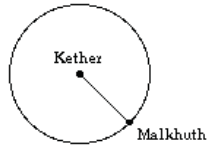


This very pantacle (or 'little whole') manifests, situates and validates man within creation, as an intermediary and link between cosmic energies:



With direct reference to the Tree of Life, we present this other diagram, which

at a single glance shows us the radiation of the Principle within creation, that is, that of the energies symbolised by the *Sephirotic* Tree, taking the Centre, or virtual point of the circle, as the Unmanifest, and the circumference, or periphery, as its manifestation:



13

MYTHOLOGY

Myths, together with symbols and rites, constitute the sacred and revelatory trilogy through which archaic peoples and the civilisations of antiquity expressed their entire culture, their very being. If the symbol represents the ‘fixation’, in a specific substance, of an Archetypal Thought or Idea, and the rite merely sets the energy of the symbol in motion through rhythmic and generative gestures, the myth evokes the time of the primordial and sacred origins of peoples, as well as the deeds and exploits of the civilising heroes and gods who created them. At the origin of any civilisation, religion or culture, there is always a mythical Being, a god made man or a man transfigured into a god, who reveals to them the sacred sciences and arts. That being the case, and as the Unanimous and Universal Tradition tells us, the mythical narrative is a teaching that conveys, using the emotive language of poetry, an ‘exemplary’ story, a model story for mankind to emulate. In this sense, we may say that every mythical narrative awakens an intellectual emotion that wells up from the deepest recesses of our being, transporting us through it to a time where the profane, linear and sequential do not exist. Mythical time is in truth a non-time, at least in the sense in which we ordinarily conceive of it, which means that it is always occurring, at this very moment, for in the reality of the Universal Being there also exist timeless origins.

To live the myth is to recover the ‘memory’ of our non-human origin (Platonic *anamnesis* or reminiscence) where everything is new and pristine, and the notion of before and after is nullified by a present devoid of any possible chronological duration. Using symbolic analogy, in the face of the destructive and dissolving power of horizontal time, which becomes a perpetual ebb and flow, the mythical event enables a vertical bridge that connects to a different order of reality, supra-historical by its very nature. The message that emerges from myths is, therefore, something related to the cosmogonic process, to the creation of the world from a primordial chaos. In our own inner work, we can perceive this archetypal process in the order that gradually takes root in our confused psyche when we come to understand the Ideas expressed by the teachings of Sacred Science, subsequently putting them into practical effect, living them out and experiencing them in our daily lives. Finally, let us note that

initiatory and esoteric legends, and to a lesser extent, the tales and fables that survive in popular folklore, are so many forms adopted by the mythical narrative to express universal truths.

14 NOTE:

There may be concepts that our reader rejects as unfamiliar. However, do persist with them and try to relate them to others found in this very Introduction. On other occasions, you may find the language in which they are expressed strange, since analogy is represented through images and forms an ever-present poetic style. Try to assimilate and make your own this language, which is characteristic of the discourse of life, art and magic. Consider the possibility that, through this work, you may gain access to the roots of things and a full understanding of them, whilst broadening your inner horizon through an attitude of growth, cultivation and the realisation of your personal potential. Moreover, this attitude, which will be reflected unconsciously in other aspects of your being, will likewise help you to triumph over those moments when your loneliness presents itself as a harsh reality. Or allow yourself to feel compassion for yourself.

15

HERACLES-HERCULES

This figure, the archetype of the triumphant hero—that is, the man who, through a series of trials and adventures, manages to ‘become divine’, or rather, to return to his divine origins (since he is the son of Zeus-Jupiter)—is perhaps the most significant and emblematic of Greco-Roman antiquity. His symbolism encompasses not only the twelve famous labours and trials he must undertake at the behest of Hera-Juno, the female counterpart of Zeus-Jupiter (the latter being a symbol of the fertilising spirit), but also a series of fabulous victories that go hand in hand with his numerous weaknesses. This opposition between masculine, celestial and spiritual energies, and feminine, earthly and material energies, prefigured by the Olympian couple Zeus-Hera (Jupiter-Juno for the Romans), will shape the life of Heracles-Hercules, born human, and who, through the purifying struggles of his entire existence, is received on Olympus as the favoured son of his heavenly Father by virtue of his continuous sacrifice, through which he has not only vanquished countless external enemies, but has also emerged victorious from the internal struggles against his indefinite tendencies towards density—a reflection of his innumerable egos—before attaining the knowledge and peace that are emblems of the soul’s immortality and eternal life—which he ultimately achieves through his combative spirit, sublimated by the constant quest for Spirit and Truth, along a path marked by errors, corrections and achievements.

To recount the labours, feats and adventures of this hero would take at least a volume. We shall confine ourselves to presenting readers with some of the elements of the rich symbolism of this mythical figure, bearing in mind that all his misfortunes and downfalls are caused by Hera, the embodiment of her destructive and degenerate impulses, since this goddess cursed him for being the son of her husband Zeus (the ascending spirit), who was unfaithful to her by fathering Heracles outside their Olympian marriage, the reason

the human hero must be the object of her vengeance and her nefarious influence. It is important to remember that the name Heracles means 'the glory of Hera'. We shall note that all these 'labours' or battles form the narrative of a continuous poem and refer to the purification of the spirit through victory over the dark 'material' impulses, that is, between the opposition and complementarity of the most subtle and the most dense.

In his early exploits, Heracles subdues the Erymanthian boar, defeats the Cretan bull and slays the Nemean lion. All these animals symbolise the living forces of the passions, which the hero must overcome without denying them, as he must face them as obstacles in his path.

Likewise, he subdues the queen of the Amazons, that is, his passive and dark side, one of his unstable egos. He also slays the Lernaean Hydra, an image of those serpentine egos whose heads are almost impossible to cut off—a task made easier for him by having previously cleared the Augean stables of manure. He then prevails over the giant Geryon and over Antaeus and Diomedes, symbols of bestiality and the anti-spiritual, and is thus able to hunt the celestial emissaries, the birds of Lake Stymphalus, which allows him to capture alive the doe with bronze feet, an image of lightness, grace and speed. Finally, he reaches the Garden of the Hesperides, where he reaps the golden fruit of his labours, which enables him to subdue the three-headed monster-dog, Cerberus, guardian of Tartarus (like the dragon in other traditions), the final obstacle on the path to reintegration with the Self.



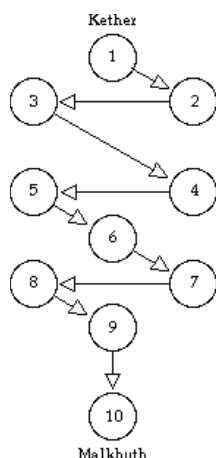
[fig. 2](#)

16

KABBALAH

Kabbalah teaches that energies flow through the Tree of Life from Unity, *Kether*—represented by the number one—to formal and substantial manifestation: the world and matter as we know them and as perceived by the senses. This flow of energies, or vibrations, which are almost imperceptible, are called emanations, and they constitute every manifestation, whatever the genus, species, form, type or dimension in which it is expressed. The energies of the *sefirot*—all of them invisible, except for *Malkhuth*, the synthesis and receptacle of the entire Tree—follow a successive descending path from Unity (1) *Kether*, down to the Decade, the Earth, or the World, *Malkhuth* (10), which is an inverted reflection of *Kether* ($10 = 1 +$

0 = 1). The other *sefiroth*, or numbers, are regarded as intermediaries between non-manifestation and manifestation. And they are considered to be the different aspects, or attributes, of a single and same energy. Like the forms taken by a stream of water as it flows down from the mountain (spring, brook, pool, waterfall, tributary, river, etc.) until it reaches the sea.



17

ETYMOLOGICAL

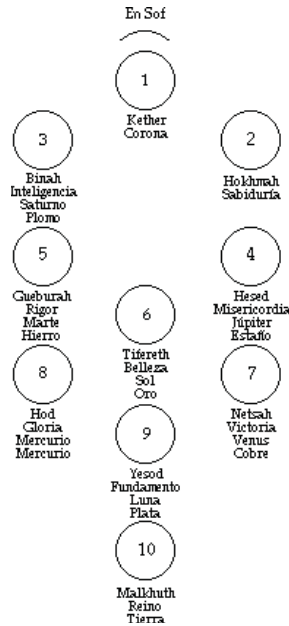
A topic of interest, which broadens the scope of our research, is the etymology of words. Cultural origins are sacred, since a god or goddess always patronises and reveals the arts, sciences, industries, organisation, etc., and this is universally true for all peoples. Language, too, was taught to humankind in a mythical age. Indeed, man has been given the power to name, that is, to re-create, since names, for Kabbalah and esotericism in general, designate the essence of things; and this power of the Word is implicit in all language. This means that there is no dissimilarity between things and their names, since the name signifies the reality of the thing, the energy it represents, which the name confirms and reveals. Language is therefore not a convention, nor are words mere artificial constructs or primitive babbling, expressing exclusively ‘physical’ or utilitarian needs. The origins of words are of the utmost importance and illuminating, for the roots from which they spring, as well as the different meanings they possess, or may possess, and the connections to which these analogies lead us, form a revealing study of the concepts from which they derive—concepts which, through their profane use, have become worn out and have thus lost their tremendous evocative and emotional value, to the point of becoming disposable and insignificant. A simple dictionary containing the etymology of words is all we need to begin our search for roots and origins, which will yield more than one beautiful and pleasant surprise. Also, and in another sense, discovering the meaning of our

, why we bear it, and the biography of those who have been called by the same name, is also significant. Moreover, in everyday life there are chains of words related to Astrology, Alchemy, Kabbalah, Magic, Metaphysics, etc. The days of the week provide a clear example: Monday = Moon, Tuesday = Mars, Wednesday = Mercury, Thursday = Jupiter, Friday = Venus, Saturday = Saturn, Sunday = Sun (in English).

18

KABBALAH

The *Sephirotic* Tree of Life model provides a prototypical ordering of the true forces that constantly bring about the act of creation—that is, the descent of the spiritual emanations that will subsequently form what we commonly call matter, or the physical plane, or *the hylic realm*. Therefore, through familiarisation with these energies—that is, through their comprehension—one can gradually weave together the analogical meaning of vibrations and correspondences that bind the Universe together in its visible and invisible, material and immaterial aspects, with the aim of ascending to other planes of identification with the Universal Being through the hermetic vehicles and traditional doctrine. Below we present further astrological and alchemical correspondences from the diagram. We also include *En Sof* (Infinite) in it, which lies above *Kether*, symbolising Non-Being, the authentically metaphysical and supracosmic, including that which is not manifested even as a Principle.



With the aim of ‘charging’ the spheres of the Tree of Life with ideas

that serve as a support for meditation and promote realisation, we wish to add some elements relating to their astrological connections, which will help us to understand them better. These are linked to the nine spheres of traditional cosmogony, seven of which correspond to the planets.

In Sof, the Non-Being, often equated by Kabbalists with supra-essential Nothingness—that is, with Voidness—lies beyond the firmament, and one reaches it by passing through *Kether*, to which the symbolism of the North Star may be attributed, as the Gate of the Gods, the true philosopher's stone from which hangs the plumb line of the Architect of the Universe. This star reigns in the empyrean, the realm of pure and eternal fire, the place in heaven where archangels, angels and the blessed enjoy the everlasting presence of the Supreme Deity, for the central axis converges there, the fixed and incorruptible stars being likened to *Hokhmah*. *Binah* is associated with Saturn or Cronus, Living Time ever-present, who, by devouring his children—the entire creation—perennially regenerates it and enables manifested beings to return to their unmanifested eternal abode; he is the father of Zeus or Jupiter—King of Olympus—who, like *Hesed*, governs and legislates the entire Creation. *Gueburah*, the rigorous destroyer, is likened to Mars, the warrior god. And *Tifereth*, divine Beauty, Centre of Centres, is clearly associated with the Sun, the giver of life, light and heat, through which we gain access to those higher worlds.

The three inner planets, which are closer to Earth than the Sun and whose cycles are faster, are situated in the world of *Yetsirah* and are associated with the spheres of this plane. *Netsah*, as we already know, corresponds to Venus, goddess of Love, lover of Mars, whom she 'disarms' through passionate ecstasy. She, like the Muses and the Graces, is an inspiration to artists, and grants victory to those who understand her, thus acting as an emissary of beauty and union. *Hod* is associated with Hermes-Mercury, the swift winged messenger of the gods, who spreads their teachings and signs across the Earth. He is depicted with wings on his feet, which refer to his speed and his connection with flight. He is also shown with the symbol of the Caduceus, the two serpents ascending the vertical shaft, which have a pair of wings indicating their volatile nature. The latter has come to be the symbol of medicine, for, as we said, Hermes-Mercury – and the gods, angels and spirits associated with him – has always been regarded as a healer of bodies and souls, the divine healer, the promoter of rites and initiatory death, through which we regain our health. Finally, *Yesod* is assigned the Moon, the queen of the night, which has unanimously been linked to the celestial mother, the illusion of forms, the lower waters and the seas – as well as to all liquids – and above all to the fertilisation and fertility that takes shape on Earth.

19

ASTROLOGY

Here are some characteristics of the seven planets which, as we have just seen, fit perfectly into the Kabbalistic diagram:

SATURN: Saturn is the planet furthest from Earth, but also the highest. In judicial astronomy (Astrology) it



it is usually seen as slow (which it indeed is) and heavy (Alchemy equates it with lead), and is therefore associated with old age in its negative aspects, in contrast to the agility and flexibility of Mercury. However, and despite the fact that the vibrations of this celestial body are psychologically perceived as a state of melancholy and spiritual unease, it is the prelude to profound realisations, linked to what lies beyond, to the highest, most mysterious and hidden realms. Experience and intelligence are some of its attributes, which we must also relate to old age, and even to Antiquity. All planets have a malefic and a benefic aspect, just as each of the *sefiroth* does: a luminous half that looks towards *Kether*, and a dark half that looks towards *Malkuth*.



JUPITER: A benevolent and generous entity; Father of the gods and son of Saturn, this precedence gives us not only the idea of energies arranged hierarchically, but also that of a

An unchanging order. He constantly feeds the fire of life, and its regenerative vapours continually give rise to new beings, ideas and things, with no limitations other than the power he sometimes wields through his weapon: the lightning bolt.



MARS: Mars destroys on the world stage all that is already useless and unnecessary, although at first glance his regenerative role is not always clear. God of war, indispensable for perpetual universal renewal, his influence can be seen not only in human struggles but equally in the perpetual macrocosmic battles.



THE SUN: It is the direct intermediary between the unmanifest and manifestation. Its energy, drawn from the most hidden depths of the heavens' possibilities, is projected onto the plane of creation, producing all manifested things, of which he is the Father on a creative level, including humankind. His radiant energy and central position are essential to life, which he seals and shapes.



VENUS: The well-known goddess of Love, she is responsible for nothing less than uniting the scattered fragments of the self and the universe. In her highest aspect, she is associated with the spiritual and mystical mysteries of love, and intercourse with the gods. Her lower aspect relates to the personality and is expressed through the possession of the other and genital energy.



MERCURY: Emissary of the gods, his energies are assimilated by mortals as revelations that his versatility imprints upon the intellect. He is therefore an initiator, and his mental agility – quicksilver – allows him immediate intuitive insights that can sometimes confuse us; remember, too, that he is the numen of charlatans, merchants, and even thieves.



MOON: A conspicuous, nocturnal celestial body, it is related to the Earth – of which it is a celestial image – to fertilisation and to the essential potency of vital emanations. Its identification with waters and darkness is easy to understand. It presides over the night, and its faint light, and the periodicity of its cycles, herald the presence of other hidden realities, beyond the psychic phenomena that constitute its realm.



EARTH: It is here that the energies of the stars mature, giving concrete form to the ‘matter’ of the world. It is therefore a symbol of density and of gravity’s pull downwards. Within its depths, energies analogous to those of the stars, and in its crater the most tangibly substantial things are cooked.

20

ALCHEMY

The 4 Elements. The division into four elements established by Greco-Roman antiquity in its cosmogonies is well known. As our readers know, these are Fire, Air, Water and Earth, and they are present in varying proportions in everything we consider to be matter. In fact, these elements form a chain, or successive series, since Fire is equated with the vital principle that Air carries and Water diffuses until it solidifies into Earth. There are, moreover, various relationships between these elements, to the extent that the sequence can alter its order, or even reverse it. And so we see that Earth, equated with the solid (ice), can liquefy, only to then evaporate and transform into Air (vital breath) emanating directly from Fire (the radiant element), the true agent of creation through its dual manifestation: light and heat. It should be noted that these elements find in their cycle a common denominator to which they refer and which is their essence, upon which they depend. That mysterious element upon which the radiant, aerial, fluid and compact principles depend – since it is their perpetual source – and which in turn synthesises them, is called by alchemists the quintessence. In fact, Fire is its primary representative, since every action cooked in the *Athanor* or crater, whether in the macrocosm or the microcosm, requires its participation; it is capable of generating and also of destroying, sometimes completely. Therefore, a judicious and, above all, regulated use of this element is essential in any alchemical operation, since all of them, divided into two main themes—dissolving and coagulating—are carried out based on the amount of fire (light and heat) used or not used in different transmutational procedures.

It goes without saying that these ‘elements’ to which we refer are not strictly material, but symbols of Universal Principles and not concrete substances taken in a literal sense. We must clarify that this is equally true of the seven metals, identified with the seven astrological planets with which Alchemy works, since both iron and mercury, etc., exceed the limits of their designation with respect to what is ordinarily understood by these terms.



Fuego



Aire



Agua



Tierra

The three alchemical principles—Sulphur, Mercury and Salt—are also often combined with the four elements, and in various ways. In

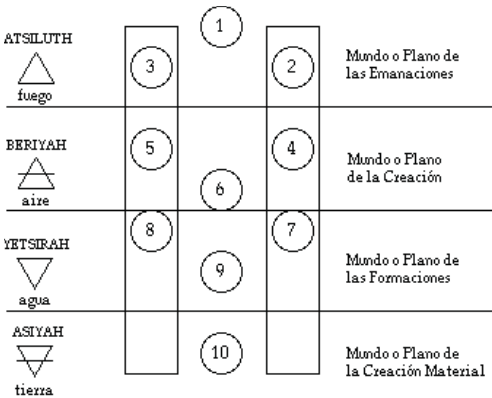
Arithmosophy, this is expressed as follows: $3 + 4 = 7$; $3 \times 4 = 12$. It is obvious that this formulation is linked to astrological symbolism and therefore also to rhythms and cycles that likewise obey Universal Principles.

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When various traditions speak of gods, divine names, archangels and angels, they are in fact referring to specific intermediary energies which, like a ladder, are situated between the Supreme Unity—which is truly unmanifest—and the indefinite variety of its phenomenal manifestations. In Kabbalah, these energies—or divine attributes, as we have already seen—are the *sefiroth*, whose unfolding constitutes what has come to be known as the Doctrine of Emanations. As we know, the *sefiroth* run through the Tree of Life from top to bottom, from the most subtle to the densest and coarsest, forming the very structure of the cosmos, divided into four hierarchical planes or levels, which man can experience within himself through his physical, psychological and spiritual reality.

These four planes begin with the highest, *Olam Ha Atsiluth*, which means World of Emanations, and to it belong the *sefiroth Kether* (1), *Hokhmah* (2) and *Binah* (3). This triad of principles constitutes the ontological realities, relating to the knowledge of the Universal Being, thus preceding the manifestation and progressive solidification of all things. The most invisible and profound energies emanate from this supreme triad, which begins to manifest from the World of Creation, *Olam Ha Beriyah*, constituted by the *sefiroth Hesed* (4), *Gueburah* (5) and *Tifereth* (6). As its very name suggests, in this World the first forms of creation are generated in their most subtle and formless aspect, manifested through the World of Formations, *Olam Ha Yetsirah*, which in turn consists of the *sefiroth Netsah* (7), *Hod* (8) and *Yesod* (9). This process of emanation culminates in the World of Material Concretion, *Olam Ha Asiyah*, consisting solely of the *sefirah Malkhuth* (10), which is the only one in the entire Tree that is visible and perceptible to the senses; it is from this point that our ascending process of return to Unity begins.

Below is the *Sephirotic* Tree divided into the four Kabbalistic worlds, which are also related to the alchemical elements discussed earlier:



These four worlds, planes or levels, may equally be considered as three, since *Beriyah* (World or Plane of Creation) and *Yetsirah* (World or Plane of Formations) may be taken as one. *Beriyah* would correspond to what antiquity called the Upper Waters, and *Yetsirah* to the Lower Waters, which are separated – and united – by the ‘surface of the waters’, as shown in the diagram.

The former are linked to the element of air and are considered to constitute the celestial vault, and the latter to the element of water, forming rivers and oceans, both united at the horizon line. These two planes may be regarded as a single level and correspond to the intermediary between the first (*Atsiluth*) and the last (*Asiyah*). It is within them that all internal and hermetic work takes place. Likewise, these six *sefiroth*, referred to in Kabbalah as those of “cosmic construction”, correspond in the human being to the higher psyche (*Beriyah*) and the lower psyche (*Yetsirah*).

It should also be borne in mind that there is a complete *Sephirotic Tree* on each plane: one in the world of *Asiyah*, another in *Yetsirah*, yet another in *Beriyah*, and finally another in *Atsiluth*. Our view of the Kabbalistic Tree thus becomes three-dimensional; that is to say, we can visualise it (without it losing its essential unity) on four levels of interpretation, which are present in all things, including, of course, ourselves. The sacred and revealed texts of all traditions can also be read in this way. These levels are, therefore, hierarchical degrees of knowledge. For now, we shall work with the Tree at the level of *Asiyah*, that is, the *sefirah Malkhuth*, the physical plane and that of material manifestation, which is that of man conditioned by his egoic identifications and his senses, and from there, invoking *Kether*, we shall gradually ascend through different worlds, from the grossest to the subtlest, from the shell to the core, which will allow us to know other states of our consciousness, which in this way becomes universalised until its full identification with the Being, the *Adam Kadmon* or Primordial Adam.

Note: *It is essential, and an important exercise, to learn and memorise these names in Hebrew and English, as well as the arrangement of the sefiroth that constitute the Tree. Draw this diagram several times on paper and try to retain a clear image of it.*

22

INITIATION I

Initiation into the Mysteries entails a complete transmutation that must take place gradually within the adept, at various levels, during the journey towards self-knowledge; it is a step-by-step path in which the different states of being will be gradually discovered.

The term ‘initiation’, derived from the Latin *initium*, means ‘beginning’ and also ‘entry’. On the one hand, it signifies the start of a process of understanding metaphysical reality, and on the other, entry onto a truly spiritual path that will lead to a genuine ‘deification’ of those who can undertake it and persevere to the end.

The initiate must die to the profane and illusory world and shed the false identity associated with their purely individual, transient and mortal aspects, whilst simultaneously being reborn into a sacred and true world that will identify them instead with the real and immutable, with that pure and immortal essence which constitutes their true Self. This journey entails an inner voyage, and will be accompanied by the knowledge of other worlds that are here and now, but which the ordinary mind cannot even imagine.

For Initiation to take place, the adept must allow the sacred symbols and rites provided by the doctrine of the Unanimous Tradition to penetrate their inner being and bring about that integral transformation which will occur when these instruments of consciousness-awakening order the intellect and touch the most subtle and imperceptible fibres that connect with eternal truths. It involves an unfolding of hidden and mysterious potentials that lie within our own inner being and a development of the truly spiritual possibilities that lie dormant in the ordinary state. The study of traditional symbolic codes – such as those provided by our Programme – as well as meditation and concentration – and the practice of initiatory rituals – will be suitable vehicles for this transmutation and awakening of consciousness to take place, and for attachments and false identifications to be progressively replaced by what is called the Supreme Identity.

This process, clearly symbolised by the transmutation of metals proposed by Alchemy, as well as by the various stages envisaged in constructive symbolism, comprises two phases: the first is called virtual initiation and extends from the beginning of the Work until the attainment of the state of the ‘true man’, passing through various degrees that involve overcoming trials which will determine whether the candidate is qualified; the second – called real or effective Initiation – involves the knowledge and experience of superhuman states and the attainment of the state of ‘transcendent man’.

The candidate for Initiation is like a seed which, whilst containing all the possibilities of development and procreation, cannot realise them until it penetrates the earth – the initiatory cavern – descending into the underworld, and dies, to be born anew. That is why the newly initiated is called a ‘neophyte’, or new plant (*neo* = new; *phyto* = plant), for they have already overcome the first death and are ready to embark on their vertical and ascending development.

This death entails a complete dissolution of previous states, which must be repeated cyclically and gradually – at various levels, each increasingly subtle and elevated – throughout the course of the initiatory process, until the new man is reborn, the true man, fully regenerated, who will have already unfolded the full range of his human possibilities and will be ready to transcend supra-individual states and recover his true Self. He will thus have returned to the virginal state of the origins, to the heavenly homeland.

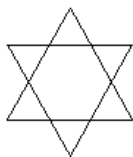
We do not wish to conclude without mentioning something very important to bear in mind in the initiatory or cognitive process: that of not confusing the psychological plane with the spiritual, an error that is very common today. This is

is because the spiritual has been denied, by drawing a sharp distinction between soul and body, thereby assigning a spiritual or pseudo-spiritual category to everything that is not material or corporeal.

23

THE ANALOGY

The Seal of Solomon. Reality, being one and universal, nevertheless presents itself to our eyes as multiple and fragmentary, particular, ephemeral and limited. This ‘superficial’ view in fact implies a duality that needs to be resolved, since as such it could not really subsist, being in itself divided. Symbolic analogies and correspondences are the links that allow us to articulate, within a single intelligible sphere, two realities, states or worlds that are apparently disparate and unconnected. The well-known figure of the Seal of Solomon or Star of David esoterically synthesises this reality: the integral unfolding of the cosmos through the indissoluble union of the two polarised and complementary aspects of a single Universal entity. The triangular projection of the universal principles of Being (upper triangle) onto the ‘mirror of the waters’ or universal substance (lower triangle) produces the ‘cosmic reflection’ of all its existential possibilities: the world in its indefinite variety and continuity.



In the case of the symbol of the cross, the opposition of the two triangles—which, at its core, is a complementarity in which contradictions are resolved—occurs in pairs, giving rise to the laws of symmetry in humanity and the cosmos.



The interrelationships between symbols promote mental processes in which codes for communication are generated—that is, for the reception and transmission of messages—giving rise to the discourse of the world and of humankind.

We shall also note that the Seal of Solomon is found in both Eastern and Western traditions, and in the Hermetic Tradition it is one of the symbols that best illustrates the well-known maxim of the Emerald Tablet, the foundation of the laws of analogy and correspondences: ‘as above, so below; as

below is as that which is above". Although one must bear in mind a hierarchical pre-eminence of that which is above (Heaven) over that which is below (Earth), for, as we have said, the lower (inverted) triangle is a reflection of the upper (upright) triangle.

Kabbalistically, the numerical value of this symbol is 6 (3 + 3), which links it to the *sefirah Tifereth*, which, as we know, constitutes the heart and centre of the Tree of Life, for it is here that the energies of the other *sefirot* converge, intertwine and balance one another. For this reason, it is also considered a symbol of harmony and synthesis, which become present within us when we open ourselves to eternal truths and allow ourselves to be enriched by them. In this regard, we should recall that the inverted triangle of this 'Seal' is precisely one of the symbols of the heart and the chalice, receptacles of the celestial effusions.

24

ALCHEMY

We have already said that all alchemical transmutation, whether material, psychological or spiritual, is brought about by fire. Those who aspire to Knowledge must realise that their inner fire—which is none other than their passion for and love of the Truth—must be constant and continuous; that is to say, it must not burn so fiercely that our spirit is consumed and lost, nor, conversely, must it diminish to the point of being extinguished. This is the delicate balancing act of which the medieval and Renaissance alchemists spoke, who also advised that in all operations the virtues of patience and perseverance must prevail. The fundamental principles of Alchemy lie in the maintenance of that fire and the natural control of its power. However, to harmonise these energies, it is essential to know and experience them, without denying them or taking them for granted. The ordinary person knows very little about other realities or about themselves, even at the most basic level. They consider their 'personality' (that is, their egos, phobias and obsessions) to be their true identity, without realising that they have acquired these conditioning factors from their environment, in an imitative manner devoid of meaning and significance.

Sacred Science represents a guide and a path that must direct our process towards Knowledge. The apprentice alchemist must understand that the conditioned mind cannot manage on its own, and that it is necessary to acknowledge our ignorance, which is often nothing more than an attachment to purely illusory descriptions of reality, through which we have organised our existence. The Traditional Doctrine provides a safeguard in this regard, as it facilitates and focuses the maintenance of that inner fire through the gradual understanding we gain from its teachings as we learn.

25

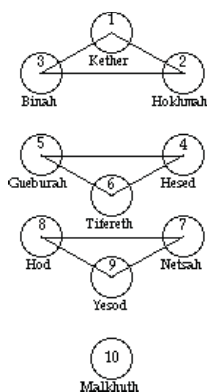
THE TREE OF LIFE

Here we wish to emphasise the *mandala* of the *Sephirotic* Tree with which we are working. We suggest that you ritually construct a new tree with your own hands and imbue it with all the elements that have emerged thus far. You should also endeavour to retain the names, their translations,

the equivalences between different disciplines, and practise them. Take pen and paper and concentrate on this work. You may also bring it into three-dimensional form. The Hebrew names of the *Sefiroth* have a magical and theurgical significance that goes beyond their simple translation into the profane language. These names of power must be memorised correctly and invoked aloud, either methodically, or when deemed appropriate in relation to everyday events and moments. Likewise, placing certain external events, and above all internal realities, within different levels of oneself are highly beneficial activities. Each plane, world or level of consciousness corresponds to an inner reality ranging from the most peripheral, concrete and known (*Asiyah*) to the most subtle, invisible and unknown (*Atsiluth*). These divisions of the diagram are also worlds or levels that we carry within ourselves.

From the known and coarse to the profound and unknown.

To conclude, we offer a traditional division of the planes of the Tree of Life into triads. The reader must observe the model attentively and imprint it within themselves, without attempting to draw rational conclusions. The effects of this learning are experienced in secret, and Kabbalistic Alchemy takes place in the chemical garden of the mind, and above all in the innermost depths of the heart. With the knowledge we currently possess, we cannot claim to have a clear idea of the process in which we are involved.



Note: Observe that the three higher planes correspond to three triads, with the last sefirah (Malkhuth) remaining exclusively connected to the plane of *Asiyah*. We shall present one final correspondence: that which relates the sefiroth of the Tree to the different parts of the human body, a division common to various Traditions and which in the West has been particularly expressed since the Middle Ages. We shall recall that, for Kabbalah, the cosmos is a gigantic man called Adam Kadmon, and the human being a miniature of him:

– Kether, Hokhmah and Binah constitute his head, with the latter two sefiroth linked to the left and right eyes respectively; they also correspond to each

of the cerebral hemispheres.

– Hesed corresponds to the left arm and Geburah to the right, whilst the heart, or centre of the Tree, is attributed to Tifereth.

– Netsah corresponds to the left leg and hip, and Hod to the right side, with Yesod being associated with the genitals, leaving Malkhuth finally in relation to the feet.

We must remember that, in accordance with the laws of analogy and the nature of symbols, what is right from one perspective may be left from another. Therefore, the Tree may also be viewed in an inverted manner to that indicated, in which case the right side corresponds to the column of love and the left to that of rigour—that is, the image of a paradigmatic man viewed from the front or from behind.

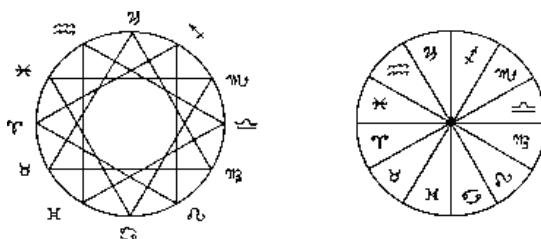
The reader may practise trying to visualise these sefirot in correspondence with the subtle centres of their body. If they succeed, it is worth considering future practices, including those involving the inversion of energy polarities.

26

ASTROLOGY

Astrology (judicial astronomy) in antiquity was the same science as astronomy, except that its focus was on the observation of cycles and their repetitions, for essentially predictive purposes. Thus, astrology interpreted individual destinies based on cosmic rhythms and celestial coordinates. In any case, Astronomy and Astrology share as their basic common point the zodiacal wheel, composed of 12 signs or stages that the Sun touches on its annual journey. In reality, the zodiac is imaginary, as it involves the division of the celestial vault into 12 segments and constitutes an ideal plane parallel to the ecliptic, that is, tangential to the axis of the world.

If the celestial vault is represented by the 360 degrees of the circumference, each of these 12 parts or symbols—almost all of them animals—will cover 30 degrees, and these will follow one another regularly throughout the annual cycle. The zodiac is, therefore, fundamentally a measure of time (whereas the stars relate more specifically to space) and should be understood as such. Furthermore, we should remember that zodiac means ‘wheel of life’ and the connection with movement is obvious.



The sequence of the signs is as follows: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. The 12 zodiacal signs, in turn, admit a traditional fourfold division corresponding to the elements of Philosophy, the Science of antiquity and Alchemy. Namely:

FIRE:	Aries	Leo	Sagittarius
EARTH:	Taurus	Virgo	Capricorn
AIR:	Gemini	Libra	Aquarius
WATER:	Cancer	Scorpio	Pisces

Note that the sequence of the elements is constant: fire, earth, air, water. At the end of the series, they are recycled in the same order. Along the 360 degrees of the circumference, the three signs belonging to the same element are found in different sections of the circle, forming a trine. (See the figure above, composed of four trines).

27

PHILOSOPHY

The term Philosophy, of Greek origin, means love (*Philo*) of wisdom (*Sophia*), that is to say, an affinity, or identity, with Knowledge. For Gnostics, *Sophia* is an entity, a principle, a deity. Man can aspire to her by experiencing her as a state of his consciousness. Let us not forget that for Kabbalah, this sphere is *Hokhmah*, Wisdom, one of the ontological principles of Being, which, together with its feminine counterpart, *Binah*, Intelligence, forms the basis of the first triad of the Tree of Life, and is an attribute, or name, of the divinity. Authentic wisdom, that is to say, the Philosophy of Antiquity, is not only an Ontology and a Cosmogony, but its entire structure tends towards Metaphysics. Indeed, one could say that this Philosophy is a Theosophy.

We shall use the term ‘Theory’ in its etymological sense, that is, the Knowledge of the Deity, or the attribute of its wisdom, as a state experienced within one’s own consciousness; and the term ‘Metaphysics’ (mentioned earlier) as that which lies beyond physics, encompassing not only the material world, but also the psychological, and even the principles of Being (Ontology), and which is, of course, far removed from what is perceived by the senses and expressed by phenomena, according to the common understanding we usually have of them. This love of Wisdom, an attribute of the Universal Being, leads to identification with that principle, which is Known and which is perceived within the consciousness. The same applies to the communion with Universal Intelligence. Unfortunately, with the gradual darkening of the times in which we live, Philosophy has been losing its original light and has ended up becoming a mere dialectical game, or a rhetorical and rational exercise that cannot escape its own systematisation.

28

KABBALAH

In our last diagram, we saw the division of the *sefiroth* of the Tree of Life into triads. There we can see that these correspond to the three highest Kabbalistic worlds, with the final number (*Malkhuth*) serving as the receptacle for the *sephirothic* emanations, which, through this division into triads, incorporate in their form the three principles—active, passive and neutral—that characterise the columns or pillars of our Kabbalistic model.

We shall recall that the first triad, comprising the highest ‘numerations’ (1, 2, 3), or Universal Principles, consists of *Kether* (Crown), *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) and *Binah* (Intelligence), forming the world of *Atsiluth*, or of Emanations, also marked by the first three numbers of the decimal scale. *Kether* is Unity and, as such, the first determination; *Hokhmah* is often called the Father and *Binah* the Mother, as the generators of the cosmic unfolding.

Although they appear to be three from the manifested perspective, these Principles in themselves constitute the Unity of Being, the supreme Ontology, which they themselves symbolise. As we have said, *Kether* is Knowledge, or the Good, whilst *Hokhmah* is the active subject and *Binah* the passive (receptive) object of that essential Good or Knowledge.

The second triad (4, 5, 6) is composed of the *sefiroth* *Hesed* (Grace, Love, Mercy), *Gueburah* (Rigor), also called *Din* (Judgement), and *Tifereth* (Beauty or Splendour). They constitute the prototypical World of *Beriyah*, or Creation, a direct reflection of the Archetypal World of *Atsiluth*, as aptly expressed by the inverted triangle, which symbolises the descent of divine energies into the bosom of manifestation. *Hesed* is the constructive principle, whilst *Gueburah* represents the destructive principle, although both arise simultaneously from the upper triad as two necessary energies, which neutralise and balance one another in *Tifereth*. If from the bosom of *Hesed* arise all the creatures and beings that are to manifest (those whom it marks with its inexhaustible Love and Mercy), from *Gueburah* emanates the essential Rigour that sets limits on the expansive energy of *Hesed*, thus discarding all that is superfluous and unnecessary in the creative process. *Tifereth*, divine Beauty, thus appears as the Centre where these apparent opposites are reconciled, manifesting Unity and Being in all things.

The third triad (7, 8, 9) of the Tree of Life is composed of the *sefiroth* *Netsah* (Victory), *Hod* (Glory) and *Yesod* (Foundation). They constitute the World of *Yetsirah*, or the plane of Formations, so called because it is here that the formless ideas of the plane of *Beriyah* take on a subtle form, constituting the psychic realm of manifestation proper. It thus corresponds to the ‘Lower Waters’, an inverted (and in a sense illusory) reflection of the ‘Upper Waters’ of *Beriyah*. *Netsah* and *Hod* emanate directly from *Tifereth*, although, as we can see, due to their location on the lateral pillars of the Tree, they are related to *Hesed* and *Gueburah*, respectively. Hence *Netsah* is an active and expansive energy, where those same informal principles (which are all beings before they manifest) are refracted into an indefinite multiplicity, acquiring subtle form thanks to the intervention of the passive and contractive energy of *Hod* (which, however,

also brings them the death, or transformation, necessary on their path back to the Origin). From the human perspective, *Netsah* is true Art, which leads us to the archetypes and the Spirit, and *Hod* is the Rite with which we sanctify time and space and bring mythical beings to life, identifying with them. The permanent and mutual interrelation between *Netzach* and *Hod* generates the *sefirah Yesod*, which thus appears, precisely, as the necessary foundation through which these forms descend to the physical and material plane, which is properly *Asiyah*.

On this final plane, or World of Material Concretion, only the *sefirah Malkhuth* (10), called the 'Kingdom', is found. She is the Earth or lower Mother, regarded as the substantial vessel of all the invisible energies descending from the Tree, and where these acquire sensory reality. In Kabbalah, she is regarded as the Bride of the King (who is *Kether*), thus manifesting the presence of Unity within the ever-changing stream of perishable forms.



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Alchemical art, in dealing with the transmutation of metals, regards them as symbols of the psychological changes that initially take place within the apprentice; by studying the sacred texts with concentration and patience and experiencing them within his inner *Athanor*, he will come to observe the transformations brought about by a new vision. In this way, he will notice things that previously eluded him, details he had not noticed before, and which now present themselves to him laden with meaning. The fascinating process of metallic transmutations instils in the aspirant a reverent discretion. That is why the science of alchemy is a mirror in which the apprentice must look to gradually comprehend the structure of the cosmos and their own constitution. In this sense, traditional inquiry and research are particularly important.

On the other hand, we have linked the alchemical process with the process of initiation, known and practised since time immemorial by the Unanimous Tradition and Antiquity. This is spiritual Alchemy, which does not stand in opposition to, but rather complements, material and psycho-physical operations. Inner transmutation is expressed in the psyche as a complete revolution or regeneration of values, which includes the death of the old man and the birth of the New Man. This gestation is likened to the birth of a world, and thus corresponds to cosmogony. Furthermore, the Path or Initiatory Way is also a replica of the soul's *post-mortem* journey and includes immersion in the realm of the dead. The alchemist, both subject and object of this science, must watch over and force himself to understand, even though, paradoxically, he knows that the results of his art are only obtained with the utmost patience and care, and that at times he must redouble his efforts. The Deity is a source of constant wonder and cannot be known without sacrifice, that is, without a 'sacred act or action', which is precisely what the word sacrifice (from the Latin *sacrum facere*) means. Likewise, it is known that the alchemists of Antiquity, like those of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, used prayer as an effective means of transmutation and of communication with the spirit and soul of the world, which, through their emanations, tempered their character.

Geometric symbols have, as we said before, a precise symbolic relationship with mathematical figures. As will be seen, each number corresponds exactly to one or more figures in geometry; we could say that these are the spatial representation of the very same energies that numbers also express in their own way.

Since all numbers can be reduced to the first nine (for example, the number $8765 = 8 + 7 + 6 + 5 = 26 = 2 + 6 = 8$, and we could proceed in this way with any number greater than nine), we shall for now confine ourselves to briefly describing the symbolism of the first nine numbers plus zero.

1 The number one, and its corresponding geometric point, seemingly representing the smallest, contains in potential, however, all other numbers and figures. Without it, no other could have any existence

at all. Every number is constituted by the previous one plus one, just as every geometric figure arises from a first point; that is to say, this one generates all the others.



The One symbolises the Origin and the single Principle from which universal principles derive, and also the common Destiny to which all beings must return. It is, according to the Hermetic maxim, ‘the All that is in All’, that is to say, the Total Being.

Although the point and the One are already a first affirmation (arising from a blank page, or from zero, or from Non-Being), they are usually described in rather negative terms, since they represent the indivisible, the immutable—that is, the immobile motor, the father of all movement and manifestation.

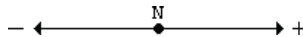
The primary goal of the initiatory works is to attain the consciousness of Unity.

2 The number two signifies the first pair, which, by separating from the One, sets its two terms in opposition to one another, whilst at the same time complementing them. It is said to constitute the first movement of the One, which consists in the act of knowing the Self, producing an apparent polarisation: the knowing subject (active, masculine, positive) and the known object (passive or receptive, feminine and negative). From the perspective of the One, this polarisation or duality does not exist, for the active and the passive (*yang* and *yin* in the Far East) contain a common energy (*Tao*) that neutralises, complements, synthesises and unites them (here the number three is already glimpsed); but from the point of view of the manifested being, this duality is present throughout creation: night and day, heaven and earth, life and death, light and darkness, male and female, good and evil, are found in the very genesis of the act of creation, and from there every manifestation is necessarily gendered.

The number two is represented geometrically by a straight line:

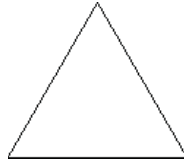


3 But as we said, for duality to arise there must always be a central point from which polarisation arises:



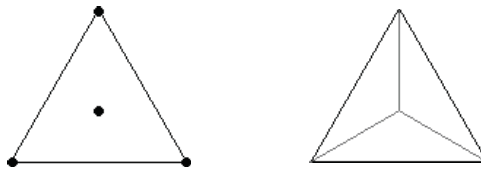
The number three corresponds to the equilateral triangle (symbol of the triunity of principles) and represents Unity insofar as it unites every pair of opposites. The three columns of the Tree, its triads and the three principles of Alchemy of which we have spoken bear witness to this; and we may also find this ternary law in the three primary colours (blue, yellow and red) from whose combination all others arise; in the first three persons of grammar (I, you, he); in the three aspects of time (past, present and

future); in the three musical notes that make up a chord (C, E, G, for example); and in the three kingdoms of nature (mineral, vegetable and animal), etc.:



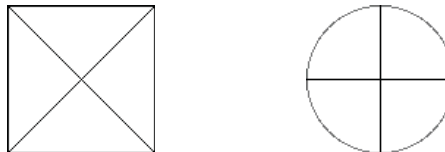
In the heaven-earth duality, the third element is the true man (the Son) who unites them, thus bringing together the material and the spiritual.

4 If the point is dimensionless, the line expresses a first dimension and the triangle is two-dimensional (it is the first plane figure), the number four is the symbol of three-dimensional manifestation, as seen in geometry in the simplest polyhedron (born of the triangle with a central point), the regular tetrahedron with four triangular faces:



It is said that the first three numbers express the unmanifest and uncreated, and that four is the number that signifies all creation. Indeed, space is divided into four cardinal points that order the entire measure of the earth (*geo* = earth, *metria* = measure), and every temporal cycle is divided into four phases or seasons, as we have seen.

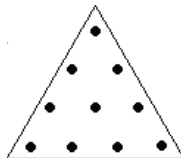
The static representation of the quaternary is the square, and its dynamic aspect is expressed in the universal symbol of the cross:



We would like to recall here what we have mentioned regarding the four worlds of the Kabbalistic Tree and the four alchemical elements, and to note that, in Jewish tradition, these are associated with the four letters of the Tetragrammaton or divine name (YHVH).

We should also note in passing that according to the so-called law of the *tetraktys* studied by the Pythagoreans, the number four, like the entire creation, is ultimately reduced to unity:

$$4 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10 = 1 + 0 = 1$$

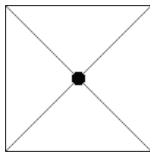


5 The number five, which is central to the series of the first nine numbers, appears in geometry when the unit becomes evident at the centre of the square and the cross:



This midpoint represents what in Alchemy is called the quintessence, the ether, the fifth element that contains and synthesises the other four and symbolises the void, the spiritual reality that penetrates every being, uniting everything within itself.

In the well-known symbol of the square-based pyramid, that central point is placed at its apex, thus showing that this unity lies on another level where the quaternary of manifestation converges:



The number five – which is also represented geometrically by the pentagon – is associated with man or the microcosm, since he has five senses, five fingers on each hand and five toes on each foot, and five limbs (including the head), and so he can be seen inscribed within a five-pointed star:



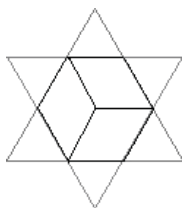
[fig. 3](#)

6 The primordial triad is reflected in creation as in a mirror, which is represented by the Star of David or Seal of Solomon, and also by the hexagon.

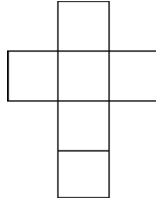
If we saw the three primary colours (blue, yellow and red) in the first triangle, the three secondary colours that complete the six of the rainbow, born from the combination of those (green, orange and violet), are placed in the second inverted triangle.



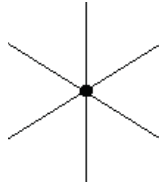
In spatial geometry, it is the cube that represents the number six, as it has six faces – as seen in the symbol of the dice, of sacred origin – of which three are visible and three invisible. The sphere (like the circle) symbolises the heavens, and the cube (like the square) the earth



Furthermore, if we place the faces of the cube on a plane, the symbol of the Christian cross is produced, which is also associated with the number six for this reason:



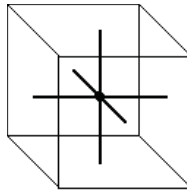
Another way of representing the number six geometrically is by means of the three-dimensional cross, or six-pointed cross, which marks six directions in space: up and down, forward and backward, right and left:



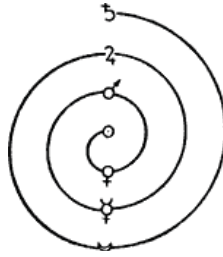
7 The number seven, like the number four, represents unity on another plane, as it can be reduced to one in the same way:

$$7 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 = 28 = 2 + 8 = 10 = 1 + 0 = 1$$

In geometry, the number seven can be represented by the heptagon and the seven-pointed star, but it is seen most frequently when the central point or primordial unit is added to figures symbolising the number six (note that the two opposite faces of a dice always add up to seven):



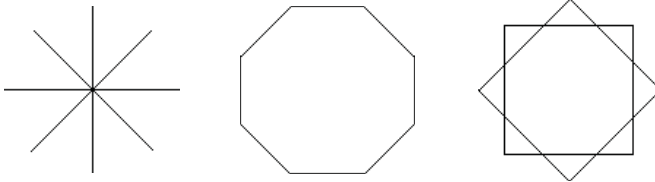
The manifestations of the number seven in esoteric symbolism are extremely varied. We shall mention in passing the best known: there are seven days of creation (six plus the day of rest) corresponding to the days of the week, the planets and the metals, as we have already seen. This number represents a seven-step scale – related to the seven notes of the musical scale and the seven *chakras* of *Kundalini yoga* – as well as the seven archangels and the seven heavens, corresponding to seven states of consciousness:



It is said that this number arises from the sum of the three principles plus the four elements, which we can also link to the seven liberal arts of the Hermetic Tradition, comprising the sum of *the trivium* (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (mathematics, geometry, music and astronomy).

8 If, in plane geometry, as we have noted, the circle is a symbol of the heavens and the square of the earth, the octagon becomes the intermediate figure between the two, through which the mysterious ‘circulation of the square’ and ‘squaring of the circle’ is achieved, speaking to us of the indissoluble union of spirit and matter.

The number eight, it is said, is a symbol of initiatory death and the passage from one world to another. That is why we find it in Christian symbolism both in baptismal fonts (in the passage between the profane world and the sacred reality) and in the octagonal division of the dome (which symbolically separates the manifest and the unmanifest), as well as in the symbol of the compass rose, identical to the rudder of ships:



9 Nine is regarded as a circular number, as it is the only one with the distinctive property that all its multiples ultimately reduce to itself (e.g. $473 \times 9 = 4257 = 4 + 2 + 5 + 7 = 18 = 1 + 8 = 9$).

This number (which is the square of three) is represented in geometry by the circle, to which 360 degrees are assigned ($3 + 6 + 0 = 9$) and which is subdivided into two parts of 180 ($1 + 8 + 0 = 9$), four of 90 ($9 + 0 = 9$) and into 8 parts of 45 ($4 + 5 = 9$).

However, the circumference could not exist at all were it not for the central point from which its indefinite peripheral points are nothing but the illusory multiple reflections that this point gives rise to.

If we add the centre to the circumference, we obtain the circle ($9 + 1 = 10$), which closes the cycle of the natural numbers.

31

THE WHEEL AND THE CROSS

The symbol of the wheel (the sphere in three-dimensional space) is closely associated with that of the circle, which we have already discussed. Like the circle, it is also found in all traditional cultures, which speaks to its primal nature, thus attesting to its importance as a vehicle for understanding the mysteries of cosmogony, regarded as a living medium that allows us to access knowledge of metaphysics and eternal truths. In fact, both symbols refer to the same ideas, as they follow an identical structure: a central point and the circumference that arises from its radiation.

We should remember that the central point symbolises Unity, the Supreme Principle, and the circumference the universal manifestation, the world or cosmos understood in its entirety, which, once manifested through the emanation of the Principle, returns once more to it, thus fulfilling a dual movement of expansion and concentration, centrifugal and centripetal – *the 'solve et coagula' of Alchemy* – which we find present in the very rhythm of the heart and in the exhalation and inhalation of the breath.

We also wish to highlight the wheel's connections with other symbols, such as the cross, which, as has already been mentioned, precisely forms its fundamental fourfold division and constitutes its internal structure, which allows the central point to be connected to the circumference, or, in other words, Unity with universal manifestation, characterised by ceaseless movement, which is driven precisely by the rotation of the cross around the centre, which nevertheless remains completely immobile, thus symbolising the immutability of the Principle.



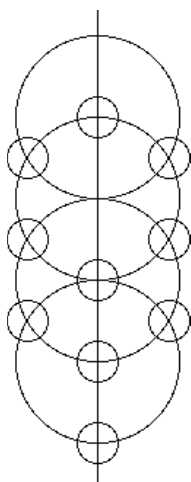
This creative movement also generates space and time (and with them the possibility of life in all its expressions), ordered by the arms of the cross, as is so well expressed by the four directions and the four seasons, which are indeed marked by the respective positions of the sun, whose astrological—and also alchemical—symbol is none other than the point and the circumference.

The wheel with the cross within it is likewise the image of every cycle, which is divided according to the quaternary model: the four phases of the moon, of the day and of the year; the four ages of human life; the four great divisions of the cosmic cycle (called *Manvantara* in the Hindu tradition), which encompass the entire manifestation of the world and of humanity, etc.

Naturally, the circle also admits other divisions, which are added to its symbolism and enrich it, as is the case with the division into six, eight and twelve spokes. In the latter case, we have the zodiac, which, in addition to being the ‘wheel of life’, in other traditions also signifies the ‘wheel of signs’ and the ‘wheel of numbers’.

32

CONSTRUCTION OF THE TREE OF LIFE



Step one: draw the central pillar or vertical axis.

Step two: draw four circles according to the model, using the vertical axis and the points where the preceding circles intersect with it as the centre points for the following ones.

Step three: draw the *sefirot* using the outer intersections of the circles as centre points, as shown in the diagram.

33

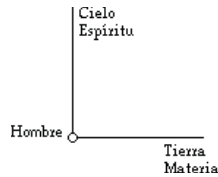
THE SYMBOL OF THE HORIZONTAL AND THE VERTICAL

Among the geometric symbols that reveal the structure of the cosmos are those representing horizontality and verticality. Although it is a single straight line, by adopting two distinct positions, it allows us to understand two different interpretations of reality, which nevertheless complement one another, as we can observe in other fundamental symbols, such as the cross and the square, which are formed by the union at a single point of the horizontal and vertical lines.

Firstly, the horizontal symbolises the earth and matter, the successive flow of time that progresses indefinitely on a plane or level of reality with no apparent possibility of escaping it. In short, it refers to the literal and purely phenomenological interpretation that man has of himself and the world. However, thanks to the dual meaning inherent in every symbol, it also symbolises submission to the law that governs the rectitude of our behaviour. Esoterically, it represents a state of passivity and

inner stillness that makes receptivity to spiritual influences possible.

It is precisely these influences that the vertical symbolises. And whilst the horizontal refers to successive time, the vertical, on the other hand, represents simultaneous and ever-present time, which, when perceived in consciousness, frees us from earthly conditioning and limitations. In man, this essentially active vertical axis acts directly upon his heart, the centre of his being, and it is from here that he begins to ascend and come to know ever more subtle states of himself, of the Universe and of the Self.

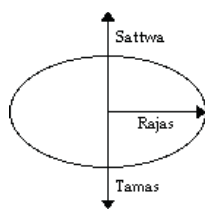


All this is perfectly represented in architectural symbolism (which we shall discuss later), where the horizontal corresponds to the level and the vertical to the plumb line. Thus, the horizontal (the earth) is the base plane of the temple, which man traverses in successive stages until he reaches the altar or centre of that plane, where the point of connection with the vertical axis is found, which links him directly to the keystone of the dome (the sky), representing the centre of the total Being, beyond which lie his supra-individual and supra-cosmic states, where he will find his true Liberation and Supreme Identity.

34

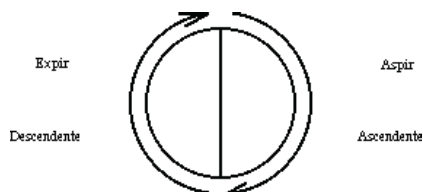
THE THREE GUNAS

Whilst the Hermetic Tradition constitutes a Western path to Knowledge, this does not mean that it lacks close parallels with other traditions that also express the same truth. Such is the case with the Hindu tradition, its theogony and cosmogony. From this tradition, we wish to highlight the three *gunas*, which represent energies or principles present in all things. The first is *sattva*, associated with subtle and celestial energy, opposed by *tamas*, identified with the gravitational pull of the Earth's density. The force of one is the inverse of the other. Yet at a certain point they unite, complementing one another. *Sattva* and *tamas* lie on the same vertical axis at different levels. And the midpoint between them is where they converge. This convergence and neutralisation gives rise to a third energy, generated by the expansion of the power of the other two, creating a plane of horizontal radiation, *rajas*, which is the projection of the opposing energies of the vertical plane; this, together with them, and as principles present in all things, throughout the entire cosmos, will give rise to the World.



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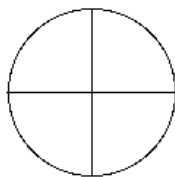
Breathing is the way in which man connects with the universe. Breathing is life, and this is aptly expressed when we speak of the breath of life. It is also the way in which the universe communicates with us, from which we draw the energy necessary for existence. Breathing is rhythmic, and this is the first thing noticed by anyone seeking to become aware of it. These respiratory rhythms, divided into two broad categories, are known as inhalation and exhalation. Through the former, as is known, man receives the cosmic breath. Through the latter, he returns it, once he has obtained from it the essential sustenance. From the perspective of the macrocosm or the universe, its exhalation corresponds to man's inhalation, and its inhalation to man's exhalation. Man and the world, microcosm and macrocosm, share in the one and only reality of the Word. Breathing is, therefore, something transcendent, of which it is important to be aware, since, as we can see, it is a powerful and simple means available to anyone to understand, within our small space, in our alchemical laboratory, and through our images, the cosmological realities reflected in the human being, for the latter has been created in the very image of the cosmos.



As can be seen, this alternation of rhythms forms a binary cycle equally valid for all creation:



As can be seen, these opposites complement one another, and one could not exist without the other. Furthermore, it is well known that respiratory cycles are directly linked to other cycles in the human body: blood circulation (diastole and systole), and also to the digestion of food (ingestion and excretion).



All these natural movements, marked by the binary, are also manifested in the quaternary, which anchors, balances and harmonises them, reflecting them in pairs.

36

ASTROLOGY

The zodiacal signs admit a quaternary division related to the elements of the Greco-Roman and alchemical tradition (see [No. 20](#)).

The three Fire signs:



ARIES: The Ram is the first sign of the zodiacal wheel, where the wheel begins its retrograde rotation. Its energy is vital, and it must possess the necessary strength to set the entire wheel in motion through its impulse. Its ruler is Mars, god of war, and it is often associated with violence, but always with the energy necessary for all patient and enduring action. If passion is one of its attributes, experience leads to tempering the character of Aries and enriching its virtues.



LEO: Situated at the heart of the summer solstice, Leo's (the lion, the King of the Jungle) position in the middle of the year and the height of summer makes it a sign as fiery as it is resplendent. The golden yellow of the lion, the sun (which rules it), and gold, come together in Leo's radiance, which leads to the ripening of the fruits.



SAGITTARIUS: The fire of Sagittarius (the archer) is not overwhelming, nor is it overcome by excessive euphoria. The great fervour has passed, and the heat has given way to the clear light of Sagittarius, where the outlines of things appear clearer. Sagittarius, ruled by Jupiter, sends its arrow towards the Sun, returning to it the sap of life it has received from it.

The three Earth signs:



TAURUS: It is characterised by the bull, an animal obviously connected to the earth, whose strength, stubbornness and persistence are well known. Taurus's extraordinary vitality surpasses its own efforts, and time and again it charges towards its goals and against its enemies, thus achieving constant successes and results. The bull is an inner symbol of self-sacrifice and struggle, which in the long run must end in success, for its strength is linked to perseverance. It is a sign ruled by Venus.

VIRGO: Known for its level-headedness and patience, combined with a practical and serene nature. It is unassuming and deeply attached to its



ways, and believes he has no need for imagination because he knows it can unsettle him. The planet Mercury rules the sign of Virgo and endows it with an essential yet barely sufficient mobility.



CAPRICORN: The goat plants its feet firmly on the ground and, maintaining a delicate balance, propels itself towards the summit of the mountain, discovering paths virtually inaccessible to all other animals. If provoked, it charges without hesitation. If left to its own devices, it ascends by virtue of its own intrepid, steadfast and climbing nature. Saturn rules this sign and lends it depth.

The three Air signs:



GEMINI: The twins constitute the first air sign, and as such they expand throughout the year. Ruled by Mercury, they are two whirlwinds that converge at a single point, manifesting stillness and evolution. Opposites attract and repel, and in that constant cosmic dance, things reproduce naturally.



LIBRA: It brings to its scales the secret of balance. Ruled by Venus, its air is a continuous breath, a temperate and conservative breeze. Yet it is versatile, and the slightest influence can cause it to change. Upright in its intention, it sometimes succumbs to imbalance, only to return to harmony.



AQUARIUS: Though the air may have settled, it can nonetheless suddenly transform into a whirlwind, a tornado or a hurricane. The wind of the Water-Bearer's sign is creative, and from it spring the germinal possibilities of other realities. Once the effects of the hurricane have passed, the earth is reborn, renewed and enriched.

The three Water signs:



CANCER: Water irrigates the wonders of the earth with its fertility, bringing them to life. Water is passive in relation to fire, and as such can be seen in lakes and rivers. Imagination and creation point to the sign of the crab as the generative power, or the nucleus of great possibilities. Its ruling planet is the Moon.



SCORPIO: A water sign, the Scorpion turns in on itself and stabs its poisoned tail into its own body, which is constantly reborn. Its venom is fatal, and the character of this sign, linked to the genitals, is striking in its complexity and depth. Its ruling planet is Mars. It is perhaps the strongest sign of the zodiac, especially in the present day.



PISCES: It symbolises waters calmer than those of Scorpio. The fish swim comfortably and freely without worrying too much about things. Their comfort is almost indispensable to them, for without it They cannot live any other way; such is their nature. Their character appears fragile, and they navigate the world with ease.

Approximately every thirty days, the sun enters a different zodiacal constellation, and the length of a year is determined by the apparent path the sun takes through the twelve signs, in almost exactly 365 and a quarter days. These are usually listed starting with Aries, that is, beginning at the spring equinox (21 March); but strictly speaking, the year begins – and ends – at the winter solstice (21 December), which is the shortest day of the year and from which the ascending phase of the sun begins.

Below are the dates to which each of these twelve signs belongs, with reference to the civil calendar, bearing in mind that in any given year these dates may vary by a day:

CAPRICORN: 21 December to 20 January - AQUARIUS: 21 January to 19 February - PISCES: 20 February to 20 March - ARIES: 21 March to 20 April - TAURUS: 21 April to 20 May - GEMINI: 21 May to 20 June - CANCER: 21 June to 20 July - LEO: 21 July to 21 August - VIRGO: 22 August to 21 September - LIBRA: 22 September to 21 October - SCORPIO: 22 October to 20 November - SAGITTARIUS: 21 November to 20 December.

This means that, on the dates indicated, the Sun is within the area of one or other of these constellations.

A person's natal sign is usually defined as the sign in which the sun was situated at the moment of their birth.

Another important aspect of astrological calculation is determining the ascendant and descendant signs, which are determined by the time of birth and the place where it occurred.

The position of the moon and the other planets also plays a key role in a birth chart. The horoscope is the interpretation of this chart according to coordinates, harmonic parameters and stellar rhythms.

Although, from the perspective of our programme, the individual circumstances of any given person are always secondary and contingent, it is nonetheless interesting to know one's own horoscope, as an indirect and suggestive way of perceiving our character and temporary circumstances, and as a means of gradually becoming familiar with the symbolic language of the heavens expressed in the cosmic order and the celestial map.

Alchemical principles, just like metals, must not be confused with the substances that symbolise them. The apprentice alchemist, by combining and ordering these subtle energies, experiences the transmutation that his Science promotes, using for this purpose the *Athanor*, that furnace or cauldron in which he will cook his work.

The entire cosmos can be observed as a great *Athanor* in which these forces interrelate, perpetually opposing and combining with one another, just as the *Corpus Hermeticum* affirms. Within the alchemist

(microcosm) the same applies: these principles and elements interact with one another, giving rise to imbalances, reactions, disturbances and contradictions. But the initiate knows that the balance of the whole, the order of the universe, lies in the constant imbalance of the parts into which the cosmos is apparently divided.

We must also note that the *Athanor* is constructed on four superimposed levels, and can be regarded as a miniature reproduction of both the macrocosm and the microcosm, that is, of the universe and of man. These four levels correspond to the four planes or worlds of the *Sephirotic Tree*, so it would be very interesting to establish the respective correspondences between them. On the first level lies the fire indispensable to the Work. The second and third levels, where the substances are actually cooked, are truly transformative, and are sometimes regarded as a single entity. On the fourth level, forms and matter have volatilised and exist in a distinct and transcendent manner. The gases, which occupy the upper part of the *Athanor*, are linked to the subtle, whilst the substance of the Great Work relates to the dense. This process of perpetual refinement and recycling of energies is the key to Alchemy, which habitually works with the favour of Time. The transformation of matter into a different mode of reality is the purpose of the wise alchemist.

This, however, is ignored by the ordinary man who allows himself to be carried along by the current of universal manifestation, which flows from the subtle to the gross, from the one to the many. This current, which is destined to destroy, separate and divide, is what prevails in the profane world; but the adept moves in the opposite direction: from the dense to the ethereal, building order out of chaos, uniting the scattered fragments of the multiplicity of transient and apparent manifestation, and always seeking, and ultimately finding, the perfection symbolised by gold, the 'elixir of immortality' or the Philosopher's Stone, the single reality that transcends all manifestation.

39 NOTE:

We wish to say a few words about the ceremonial aspect of our studies, for, accustomed as we are to living in a world that makes no distinction between the sacred and the profane, and which therefore remains ignorant of internal spiritual hierarchies, it is not uncommon for the old man who coexists with us to unconsciously deny any possibility of salvation, or to attempt to 'consume' the content of this programme. There is a sacred time and space, which correspond to the highest aspects of the being, increasingly free from its innumerable egos and passions that seek to subdue it. It is highly advisable to foster the realisation of this distinct space and time, and to this end, ritual and invocation, along with respect for the sacred, must be integrated into our daily lives from the very beginning. For these tasks and practices, a specific time is suggested – which may well be at night, when the vibrations of the environment subside – and a place to carry them out – preferably facing north or east – however small it may be. We also emphasise the advisability of having a special place associated with the Agartha material. This is due to the need to distinguish, at

every level, the difference between two visions, or entirely distinct interpretations of reality. That of the ordinary man, or the profane, and that of the aspirant to Knowledge, or the sacred. With the caveat that the sacred, or metaphysical, is not what is nowadays understood as 'religious' or 'pious', and that the profane is not that which 'moralism' might condemn as such. The sacred, or metaphysical, far exceeds the 'religious' phenomenon, or the 'devout', or superstition. And ethics transcends local 'moralising', generally motivated by a desire to impose one's own interests and points of view, which are as changeable as fashions or the shifting customs, traditions and tastes of individuals.

40

KABBALAH

We have drawn upon certain aspects of Kabbalistic science, suitable for carrying out our work with the *Sephirotic* Tree of Life, which we have linked to other traditional symbols and hermetic disciplines, as well as to practices that serve as means or catalysts for gradually observing, understanding and acquiring, through the repetition of these rituals, another level of consciousness or a different interpretation of reality and the description we have of it. Likewise, certain risks inherent in the collapse of a series of structures must be noted; if these are not replaced by the elements provided by the Traditional Doctrine, they would lead us only to a barren void, or to gratuitous despair. Once again, we are reminded of the discretion and seriousness that must surround our work, advice invariably repeated by the adepts of Science and Art. We shall return time and again to the Kabbalistic diagram, the true model of the universe, with the aim of internalising it, understanding it, and gradually intuiting the wealth of images contained within it and whose manifestation it promotes. Likewise, we wish to recall that, as the *Sefer Yetzirah* (or Book of Formations, a true Kabbalistic classic) repeatedly emphasises, there are ten *sefirot*. Not nine, but ten. Not eleven, but ten.

Continuing with our aim of introducing our readers to an understanding of the symbols as they appear in hermetic, kabbalistic and alchemical engravings, we present here an ancient illustration of the Tree of Life. As we have already noted, 'training the eye' is a preliminary step towards deepening our understanding of the symbol's true message and unravelling the truths and energies it contains. One might also optimistically say that this constitutes an introduction to 'vision'.

As can be seen, this depicts an initiate's meditation on our Kabbalistic Tree within a closed, secluded space. The room is cubic, and its door opens between two columns, representing the box of the cosmos. *Kether*, the highest and most exalted *sefirah*, crowns and touches the vault of that oratory or working chamber, and heralds the exit towards the supra-cosmic. The adept sits in an armchair whose uppermost part is an upward-facing vessel, and whose 'legs' turn towards the earth, both parts of the piece of furniture being analogous yet inverted.

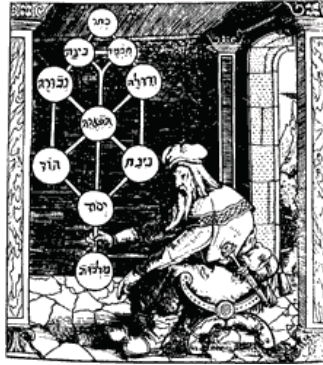


fig. 4

The Kabbalist's feet are firmly planted on the ground (signifying reality), whilst one of his hands firmly holds the diagram of the *Sephirotic Tree* (action) and the other rests serenely (contemplation), whilst his entire figure exudes an attitude of concentrated and serene attention.

41

LITERATURE

We have already observed that the origins of culture are sacred. This is particularly evident in the arts, since dance, theatre, music and the visual arts all date back to the mythical and ritualistic beginnings of humankind, and it has always been a deity who has revealed and patronised these disciplines. In antiquity, works of art were anonymous, as they still are among various peoples, and it was only from the Renaissance onwards that their authors came to be known individually. To create is to repeat and reproduce the situation of the original Creation. Literature is no exception to this principle, and the great works in verse and prose are those that awaken and give a foretaste of the restlessness and wonder of Knowledge. The poet, bard, or vate (hence the word 'Vatican'), is an inspired transmitter of the energies of the sublime, and his language is articulated with a precise and distinctive rhythm. The sacred texts of all traditions bear full witness to this. The beauty of form is the garment and the attraction of the Beauty of the Principle, and therefore reflects it harmoniously. Art is a vehicle and a means of knowing, and numerous esotericists have expressed themselves through it. Let us recall that the *sefirah Tifereth* is Beauty, and that it lies on the ascending path leading from *Malkhuth* to *Kether*.

In a broad sense, all writing is literature. But there are some works in which the artistry of expression, the clarity of the imagery used, and the clarity and order of the concepts—even when they remain veiled—make them memorable and bind them to us with subtle, emotional ties. Likewise, in the collective memory of peoples, legends transmit their myths. Fairy tales and stories of sorcerers bring us closer to a reality

prodigious. Epic poetry (the **Iliad**, the **Odyssey**) reveals a heroic message. The classicism of Dante and Virgil takes on a completely different dimension when read through a hermetic lens, thereby enriching both its content and its aesthetic. The tales of the Holy Grail, the chivalric romances, the fables (such as Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, or *The Golden Ass*), or the metaphysical works of Dionysius the Areopagite, amongst many others, are some examples of the potential of Art as a transmitter of Knowledge and a promoter of spiritual Initiations.

The message of Perennial Philosophy has taken every possible form to spread. Even 'popular' proverbs and sayings have been coined as reminders of principles of wisdom; though, like all things, they have undergone a process of degradation over time.

42

KABBALAH

Emerging in the 2nd century AD among the people of Israel, Kabbalah developed during the High and Late Middle Ages in Christian countries such as France and Spain—particularly the latter—where, in the 13th century, none other than the *Zohar* was written, the great Kabbalistic book, which flourished in Italy during the Renaissance in its Christianised form and spread to the countries of northern and central Europe, as well as to England, Poland, etc., at various times, and where it remains alive to this day, as well as in Jerusalem and many other cities of the modern world, amongst both Jews and non-Jews. This is as far as the historical Kabbalah is concerned.

The term *dabar* in Hebrew means both 'word' and 'thing'. In this sense, for the Hebrews, the name of God, consisting of the four sacred letters, is unpronounceable, out of respect for His immanence, and because the pronunciation of His name would reveal Him in His tremendous majesty and grandeur. These four letters are: Yod—the letter from which the entire Hebrew alphabet has emerged, which is considered a point and whose numerical value is ten; Heh—called the first *Heh* to distinguish it from the second which forms the divine name, with a numerical value of five; Vav—with a numerical value of six; and Heh—the second, of the identical value of five. The sum of the letters of the Divine Name is twenty-six, and this number is of particular importance in esotericism and Kabbalistic cosmogony. We shall then list the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. These elements are very important for certain operations. The aim here is not to provide a course in Hebrew, but rather to familiarise ourselves with Kabbalistic symbols and values. If our readers had the opportunity to study Hebrew, we would suggest they do so in order to broaden the scope of the connections and their resonance within our Hermetic work.

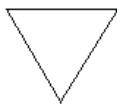


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The physiological organ of the heart is not, as is commonly believed, the seat of sentimentality and the most prudish sentimentality, but rather it has been taken in all traditions as one of the most obvious and clear symbols of the idea of the centre. In Christianity this is obvious, for when one speaks of the ‘Sacred Heart’ of Christ, one is referring to the very heart of that tradition, to the very source from which the essence of its doctrine and its deepest mysteries emanate.

Its iconographic representation in the form of an inverted triangle makes it a vessel into which the celestial emanations that enliven the entirety of the individual being descend and are deposited, enabling the individual to become truly aware of their Archetypal Self. That is why the heart is spoken of as the place where the Divine Principle symbolically resides in man, the Universal Spirit which, in terms of manifestation, appears as the smallest, most subtle and invisible, as the well-known Gospel parable rightly points out when it speaks of the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’, likening it to a mustard seed, equivalent in the Hindu tradition to the ‘germ contained in the millet seed’, identical to the ether or ‘quintessence’, which is also the centre or heart of the elemental cross, taken in this case as a symbol of the entire manifested world.



It is from this Principle that man, in fact, receives the breath of life, along with the light of Intelligence—or authentic intellectual intuition—which enables him to perceive, directly, simultaneously and without mediation (that is, in a non-dual, rational or cerebral manner), the Unity present in all things. In this sense, we shall recall that in Kabbalah the *sefirah Tifereth* (which in symbolic terms corresponds to the altar of the temple) is called the heart of the Tree of Life, for, being situated at the very centre of the pillar of balance, it enables the remaining *sefirot* to be unified and synthesised within it. That is why this *sefirah* is also called ‘Harmony’, understood as the authentic expression of universal ‘concord’, a word which precisely means ‘union of hearts’.

The name Moses immediately evokes the idea of the Jewish people, whom he embodies and at the same time brings into being. Indeed, having been born in Egypt, he is regarded as a member of the Pharaoh’s family, for he appears as the son of his sister, and as such is said to have been initiated by the high priests into the deepest mysteries of Isis and Osiris, where he excelled through his knowledge. From a young age, he felt an increasingly clear calling towards something not yet defined, but which was related neither to Egypt nor

in the enviable position he holds, a position which, however, is becoming increasingly difficult for him to maintain due to the jealousy, envy and mistrust of his uncle Ramses II and his cousin, who is set to succeed him to the throne. By 'chance', Moses, whilst defending a Jewish slave who had been treated unjustly, kills the aggressor and is forced to flee, for in cases such as his (Moses was a minister of the cult of Osiris), the Pharaoh's justice system imposes the maximum penalties. He takes refuge with another key figure, Jethro, king of *Salem*, high priest and initiate, and spiritual father of numerous nomadic peoples who inhabited the deserts and lands between the civilisations of Egypt, Chaldea, Babylon, etc., comprising Semites, Arabs, Ethiopians, etc. These were the Jews, those who, having emerged from their captivity in the foreign lands of Egypt, rose up one day and undertook a massive exodus through the desert, under the guidance of a leader who embodied and personified them, and under whose leadership, as the direct interpreter of their god *Yahweh*, they were to definitively establish themselves as the chosen people, and attain a destiny embodied in Moses himself—a name whose translation is 'The Saved One'—and which he imprints upon his surroundings, upon the people to whom he has been given the mission to establish and lead. Moses is, therefore, both a historical figure and a symbol, like all the protagonists of Sacred History. He is also a human being, and at the same time the recipient of the energies and messages of a superhuman entity, *Yahweh*, whom he worships and causes others to worship, when it is not the god himself who acts directly. As a human being, he endures all manner of misfortunes and hardships for forty years, most of them caused by the ignorance and brutality of his own people. As a divine agent, he enlivens and establishes monotheism and imposes his law with fire, sealing it with commandments. He ends his pilgrimage, and upon seeing the Promised Land, he leaves behind as his legacy The Bible, of which he writes the first five books—a masterful synthesis that forms the foundation of a people's life and a religion, which would later give rise to Christianity and Islam. Moses's astonishing energy, his constant dialogue with the deity, and the strength of his powers—transferred and shared with seventy disciples who form the inner core of priests and sages, initiates and initiators, to whom he entrusts the Kabbalah—make his succession possible until the end of this cycle. Thus is fulfilled the Destiny that Moses began and which will end with the glorious coming of the Messiah, also awaited by Christians and Muslims, and announced in all the texts and oral traditions of the monotheistic cultures.

45

HERMES

We shall now turn to Hermes, a key deity in Egyptian, Greek and Roman tradition. Thoth, the Egyptian Hermes—known in Alexandria as Hermes Trismegistus, that is, the possessor of three-quarters of universal wisdom—is also identified with the Greek Hermes and the Roman Mercury. This god has always been regarded as a symbol of transmission, which is why the attributes with which he is identified—a winged helmet and sandals—are associated with the wind. One of his characteristics is the speed of his movement, which in Alchemy can be observed in a similar way with the metal of the same name, which we also know as Mercury in its Latin form.

It has rightly been said that Hermes is eternal, whatever name the various peoples may have bestowed upon him. He is unanimously the transmitter of

teachings and secrets, whether he is called Thoth, Enoch, Elijah or Mercury, as we have already said. His revelation through the baptism of the intellect occurs in those who have approached Knowledge without prejudice or crutches and have intellectually aligned themselves with his patronage; his invocation, concentration and application of the various methods of his science establish direct communication with this most exalted entity, who manifests internally to any degree within individuals open to it.

As is well known, this deity has expressed itself—and continues to do so—in Western history through the Hermetic Tradition and the disciplines that comprise it.

A protective spirit of travellers, merchants and pilgrims, its influence is felt as the energy that transmits to us the swiftest and lightest messages on the initiatory path. His power is such that without him nothing would exist, for as an initiator into the mysteries of life and the cosmos, his protective – and also dissolving – vibrations act as a catalyst for the journey of Knowledge. Mercury is subtle and light, yet at the same time he holds in his hand the caduceus, symbol of the axis and the two currents that twist together upon it. His mission is specific, and he awaits us at every crossroads of our paths. His thought is wise and revelatory, as attested by the *Corpus Hermeticum*, one of the most sublime documents of Antiquity originating from Alexandria in the early days of Christianity, from which we wish to extract this passage:

“Since the Demiurge has created the entire world not with his hands, but by the word, conceive of him then as ever-present and existing, having made all things and being One Only, and as having formed, by his own will, all beings. For truly this is his body, which cannot be touched, nor seen, nor measured, which possesses no dimension whatsoever, which resembles no other body. For it is neither fire, nor water, nor air, nor breath, but all things come from it. Now, since he is good, he did not wish to dedicate this offering solely to himself, nor to adorn the earth solely for himself, but has sent down here, as an ornament of this divine body, man, a living mortal, an ornament of the living immortal.”



[fig. 5](#)

In ancient times, there was a legend according to which Pythagoras was

conceived in his mother's womb through the direct intervention of the god Apollo, also father of the Muses and heir to Hermes' lyre. This highlighted the celestial and divine origin of his doctrine, especially given that Apollo (the numen of intelligible Light, Harmony and Beauty) was considered a deity of Hyperborean origin, which linked him to the Primordial Tradition. The very name of Pythagoras derives from the Pythia of the temple at Delphi (dedicated to Apollo), who prophesied his birth as a gift to mankind; a birth that took place around 570 BC on the Greek island of Samos. Having received the Orphic mysteries characteristic of the ancient Greek tradition, Pythagoras left his native land to undertake a series of journeys that would take him throughout the ancient world, particularly to Phoenicia, Babylon and Egypt, a country where he resided for a long period of time, being initiated by the Egyptian priests, guardians of the wisdom of Hermes-Thoth. Having matured in his thinking, and after synthesising all the knowledge he had received, Pythagoras returned to Samos thirty-four years later, prepared to fulfil the lofty destiny foretold at his birth, which was none other than to lay the foundations upon which Greek culture, and subsequently Western civilisation, would be built.

In Samos he founded his first school, which would be the seed from which others later sprang up throughout the Mediterranean basin, particularly in Magna Graecia (Sicily), where the city of Crotona was the most important centre during Pythagoras's lifetime. His teachings (cosmogonic, esoteric and metaphysical) centred on Number, in which lay the origin of Universal Harmony, for through it are revealed the measures and proportions of all things, both celestial and terrestrial—an idea that Plato takes up in the *Timaeus*, his quintessential Pythagorean work. For Pythagoras, “everything is arranged according to Number”, finding in the *tetraktys* or Decade the perfect number and the very expression of that Harmony, for “it serves as a measure for the whole, like a set square and a plumb line in the hands of the Architect”. Harmony manifested fundamentally also through music and geometric forms, as attested by his famous theorems and the pentagrammatic star or *pentalpha*, the emblem of the Pythagorean brotherhood itself, which continued to survive for a long time, at least until the Alexandria of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, where it eventually became part of the Hermetic Tradition, thus reaching our own day through the various arts and sciences that seek the transmutation of the human being through Wisdom, Intelligence, Love and Beauty.

47

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE TEMPLE

The temple brings together sacred space and time within itself. As soon as we step through its door, the difference becomes evident between the outer, profane world, where time passes linearly and in an indefinite, amorphous manner, and the sacred precinct, where a mythical and meaningful time is perceived: the ‘time’ of the origins of the human being, eternity and simultaneity, known and understood within the innermost being of the man who establishes this ritual communication from the depths of the temple. Furthermore, it constitutes a model of the Universe, which it imitates in its forms and ‘proportions’, and like the Universe, its purpose is to house and serve as the means for the total and effective fulfilment of the human being. In the most primitive tribes, we find the ritual hut (or family home) as a place of

a bridge between the high and the low. Indeed, in such a structure, the roof symbolises the sky and the floor the earth; the four posts on which it rests are the pillars supporting the macrocosm. It is very important to note that in these constructions there is always a central point that opens onto another space.

Example: the keystone or *capstone*, which was not used in the construction of cathedrals, or the exit opening of the ceremonial hut (in the family home, this exit is symbolised by the chimney, the hearth).

This structure, an image and model of the cosmos, thus has an entrance that opens onto the horizontal path of the temple (transposition of the door, passage through the waters of the baptistery, loss in the labyrinth whose exit leads to the altar, the heart of the temple), and subsequently an exit opening on the vertical axis, this time situated at the summit, symbolising the Coronation of the Work and entry into another space, or world, entirely different, which lies 'beyond' the cosmos, which the temple symbolises. The temple is also a living image of the microcosm and represents the body of man, created in the image and likeness of his creator; conversely, the body of man is his temple. The centre of vertical communication is the heart, and there, in that place, the sacred fire is kindled, capable of generating the Royal Adventure of Transmutation, following the trials and experiences of Knowledge that lead to that place. In our *Sephirotic* diagram, the horizontal gate opens from *Malkhuth* to *Yesod*, whilst the vertical one opens from *Tifereth* to *Kether*. In other words, all the preliminary work, directed towards Knowledge, must have as its immediate objective the arrival at the heart of the temple, the ever-burning fire of the altar upon which the tabernacle rests—an empty space constructed according to the rules and harmonious proportions of the temple itself, of which it is the synthesis. The first part of the Lesser Mysteries (mysteries of the earth) will then have been completed, and the simultaneous ascent through the second part (the mysteries of the heavens) will begin, leaving the Greater Mysteries for beyond the temple—that is, for the supra-cosmic realm—which, being ineffable, cannot be accommodated or discussed here. In reality, this process is prototypical and valid for any change of plane or state, where it manifests itself in its own way.

48

THE SYMBOL OF THE LABYRINTH

The symbol of the Labyrinth perfectly exemplifies the process of Knowledge, at least in its early stages, those in which the being must confront the density of its own psyche (a reflection of the profane environment in which it was born and lives), that is, with its lower states, alchemically separating the dense from the subtle, which the soul experiences as successive deaths and births—*solve et coagula*—, whilst at the same time navigating numerous trials and dangers that merely reflect the inner conflict or psychodrama. That unease is characteristic of one who, having abandoned their egoic certainties and identifications, discovers before them a completely new, and therefore unknown, world, yet one to which they feel drawn because they truly sense that it is by traversing it that they will be able to rediscover their true homeland and destiny. That indelible impression of being utterly lost must compel us to find the way out, always aided by Tradition (and its messengers, the symbols), which in this case comes to us through this Agartha Programme, which, acting as a guide or axis, must lead us (provided our attitude is upright and sincere) to a state of virginity, to an

essential empty space suitable for the fertilisation of the Spirit, which is experienced in the innermost and most secret part of the heart.

It should be noted that many labyrinths depicted in the art of all peoples are authentic *mandalas* or diagrams of the cosmos, that is to say, of life itself, with its light and shadow, which will enable us to understand that this labyrinthine process is in reality an archetypal journey, a quest, in short, that all mythological heroes and men of knowledge have undertaken, and which will serve as an exemplary model for us to emulate, just as we are seeing in the series 'Biographies'. In truth, the journey through the labyrinth is a pilgrimage linked to the search for the centre, and in this sense it is important to note that many medieval churches featured a labyrinth (as in Chartres, in the centre of which the battle between Theseus and the Minotaur was once depicted) which was ritually traversed by all those who, for one reason or another, could not undertake their pilgrimage to the sacred centre of their tradition (for example, Santiago de Compostela, or Jerusalem), which was considered a substitute or reflection of the true 'Holy Land', where conflicts and struggles have ended, thus enabling the ascent through the higher states until achieving the definitive exit from the Wheel of the World.



[Fig. 6](#)

As we mentioned earlier when discussing the symbolism of the Temple, these labyrinths were situated just beyond the baptismal font (*Yesod*), and before reaching the altar (*Tifereth*, the heart), that is, between the baptism of water – associated with psychological regeneration and earthly journeys – and the baptism of fire, linked in turn to sacrifice for the spirit and celestial journeys, the former horizontal and the latter vertical. In the *Sephirotic* Tree, the labyrinth thus corresponds to *Yetsirah*, the plane of formations, or the 'Lower Waters', which the initiate must traverse on their journey through the states and worlds of the Tree of Life.

We shall add, to conclude, that in the microcosmic *Adam Kadmon*, that is, man, this labyrinth must be situated in the ventral region, an area distinguished both by its combustions and revolutions, and by the analogy presented by its internal organs with the general representation of the labyrinth.

As in the case of Pythagoras, Plato is the heir to the Ancient Orphic Tradition and the initiatory mysteries of Eleusis. Plato synthesises, brings to light, and reveals this thought, received through the teachings of Socrates and acquired through travels and studies of all kinds over the years. Plato's influence is decisive for Philosophy, which emerged from him and one of his disciples, Aristotle. It goes without saying that philosophy advances the history of thought, and that from its practical application at various levels (ranging from civic, economic and social events, to customs and traditions, morality and religion, ultimately shaping fashion, the sciences, technology and the arts), emerges the world in which we Westerners live, whether we like it or not. It is not for nothing that Plato has been called 'divine'. In antiquity, this epithet was not taken as allegorical, but rather as an affirmation of Plato's divinity; he has also been regarded as an entity, because in his dialogues (which take place between various figures of classical Greece, who expound their ideas whilst Socrates organises and challenges them) he never appears. The errors directly denounced by Socrates, and those revealed by Plato through the various interlocutors and the subtle fabric of the dialogue, are, curiously, the very ones which, developing ever since in geometric progression, have led to the crisis of the modern world. Plato's works provide a perfect explanation of Traditional Cosmogony, and his philosophical and esoteric thought is as alive today as it was when the Master wrote. One need only approach his ideas to begin to penetrate, when reading with the utmost concentration and without cultural or formal prejudices, a world of images and signs through which we journey, led by his hand.

A symbol of the Athenians and of Greek culture, Plato was born in 429 BC. Like Pythagoras, he described a world of Ideas, or Archetypes (the Pythagorean 'numbers', the 'letters' of the Kabbalah) that gave rise to all things and in which all things were synthesised. Like his teacher Socrates, he suffered, if not death by poison, then the bitterness of exile, misfortune and captivity.

50

ARTS AND CRAFTS

For an archaic, traditional society, art is everything that man creates with his hands, drawing upon the archetypal model he holds within, and which he can observe in the subtle laws governing the workings of nature—itself a manifestation of universal harmony and order. That model is none other than the idea of Beauty, regarded as the highest expression of the Creator's own Art, of whom it is said that he made all things 'in number, weight and measure'. Hence, every creative act, when it conforms to that model, imitates the original rite of the creation of the world from amorphous and chaotic substance, whether that activity be architecture, the visual arts (sculpture and painting), crafts in wood or other materials, goldsmithing, pottery, basketry and weaving, cabinetmaking, tailoring, upholstery, etc.

Some of these crafts are still practised in many places, and within them the secrets of the trade are preserved, passed on through initiation, and are thus regarded as

the pillars of inner realisation, for it is to this, ultimately, that these secrets refer, since they are inherent to cosmogony in its constant recreation within the human soul. This is the profound meaning of the symbols and rites specific to each craft, which render them a sacred activity. In reality, every man is an artist, and it is his very life that constitutes that amorphous substance, or rough stone, which must be 'worked' patiently through the constant application of the teachings received from Tradition, practising the rite of memory and concentration, until he is fully integrated into the harmony of the Great Universal Work.

In the ancient guilds of medieval builders, knowledge of the trade was normally divided into three stages or degrees of initiation, corresponding to the apprentice, the fellow-craftsman (journeyman) and the master, thus giving an idea of the step-by-step development of such knowledge. It must be said that those guilds (closely linked to the Hermetic Tradition) gave rise, over time, to modern Freemasonry, which continues to preserve the same initiatory structure as its distant predecessors.

51

ISIS

Below we reproduce a prayer to the Egyptian goddess Isis, wife of Osiris, associated with the first, lunar, initiation, whilst her consort is linked to the second, solar, initiation, and both are united in the third and final initiation, the polar, which makes possible the realisation of the supra-cosmic, of the non-human. Apuleius includes her in his work **The Metamorphoses** (or **The Golden Ass**, 2nd century AD), where he informs us that this ancient Egyptian myth survived unscathed in the Rome of his time. This invocation is recited once the descent into the underworld has taken place, where everything that is to follow is perceived directly and in a potential sense, of which this descent is merely a foretaste. Finally, let us recall the connection between the goddess Isis and the Tarot card known as The High Priestess.

"You, truly holy, everlasting protector of mankind, ever generous in favouring mortals, you have for the tribulations of the wretched a mother's tender affection. Not a day, a night, nor even a single moment passes without your bestowing your blessings, without your protecting men on land and at sea, without your extending your saving hand, after warding off life's trials. And with that hand you undo the inextricable and twisted web of Fate, you calm the storms of Fortune and neutralise the fateful influence of the stars. The deities of heaven revere you, those of hell respect you; you give the world its rotation; to the Sun, its light; to the world, its laws; with your feet you tread upon Tartarus. The stars respond to you; through you the seasons turn, the gods rejoice, the elements show themselves docile. At your command the winds blow, the clouds swell, the seeds germinate, the sprouts grow. The birds that cross the skies, the wild beasts that roam the mountains, the serpents that hide underground, and the monsters of the ocean all fear your majesty. But I possess but a meagre talent for singing your praises, and a meagre wealth to offer you worthy sacrifices; I lack the eloquence required

"to express the feelings your majesty inspires in me; I possess neither a thousand mouths, nor as many tongues, nor an inexhaustible spring of tireless words, but I shall always keep before my mind's eye, cherishing them in the deepest recesses of my heart, your divine countenance and your most holy spirit."

Isis is associated with the feminine principle (and therefore linked to the Earth and the Moon), present in all things, and manifests herself in the guise of passive, immanent and potential energy. Plutarch tells us in one of the titles of his *Ethika*:

"Isis is, then, nature regarded as a woman and capable of receiving all generation. This is the sense in which Plato calls her 'Nursemaid' and 'She who contains all things'. Most call her the 'Goddess of infinite names', because divine Reason leads her to receive every kind of form and appearance. She feels an innate love for the first principle, for the principle that exercises supreme power over all, and which is identical to the principle of good; she desires it, pursues it, fleeing from and rejecting any association with the principle of evil. Although she is both matter and dwelling-place for both, she always voluntarily inclines towards the better principle; she offers herself to him so that he may fertilise her, so that he may sow within her what emanates from him and what is like him. She rejoices in receiving these seeds and trembles with joy when she feels pregnant and full of productive seeds. Indeed, every generation is an image in matter of the fertilising substance, and the creature is produced in imitation of the being who gave it life."

52

BIOGRAPHIES

We have been presenting a series of brief 'biographies' (Heracles-Hercules, Moses, Hermes, Pythagoras, Plato, Isis) of 'people', beings or entities who have embodied spiritual states and have necessarily poured these out into the environment, in accordance with their destiny and function. We are not interested in the human and anecdotal features of these archetypal stories, nor in the interpretations to which such approaches lend themselves. We believe they are important because they are symbolic, that is, as revelations of certain esoteric patterns, perfectly applicable – insofar as they are exemplary – to humanity in general, being universal and therefore not subject to space and time except in a secondary manner. They also have another function: that of paving the way for the knowledge and understanding of another history, one that remains secret to those who are unable to delve deeper and establish connections between symbols, and who are content with the comfortable yet implausible official narratives. True history is something else. And we Westerners can read our own history as a symbolic tapestry of rhythms and cycles, a dance of cadences and intertwining threads—certainly not random—where each and every event acquires meaning within the harmony of the whole, which is viewed through a different lens, bathed in a new light. Furthermore, and this is the important point, this is particularly valid when applied to our own lives, to the anecdotes, events and stories relating to our existence. These must be considered from a symbolic perspective and never as a collection of personalised and exclusive possessions with which we identify.

Every people has intermediary beings; sometimes they are the gods themselves, at other times demigods. The Muses, inhabitants of Olympus, are counted among the former.

Daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, his fifth wife, with whom he united whilst in the guise of a shepherd, they were conceived over nine separate nights, far from the other immortals, so that there might be someone to celebrate the Olympians' victory over the Titans.

Goddesses of Memory (of the heavens) and of poetic inspiration, they are credited with the power to bestow fitting names upon all beings. Guardians of the Oracle of Delphi, they speak of 'what is, what will be, and what has been'.

Although they were born on Mount Pierius and visit Olympus, where they enliven the feasts of the immortals with their songs that make their father's palace resound, they like to gather on the summit of Mount Helicon, from where they descend at night to the dwellings of men, who can thus, in the stillness, hear the melody of their voices. They also convey to the Olympians the misfortunes and sufferings of men, the song of whose creation is a joy to Zeus.

These female entities, capable of taking on indefinite forms, and of not taking them, and to reveal to men—if they so desire—whether through the harmony of their manifestations, or through rhythm and number, or directly through their own voice, the mysteries of the generation of the gods, of the order of cosmogony, of the exploits of heroes in search of heaven and cosmising the earth, have the power to transform reality, for hearing their songs makes the sensible world a symbol of the harmony of the World Soul, a manifestation and image of the polar god, Apollo.

They unite man with the sacred because they are directly linked to the secret and harmony of Creation (Cosmogony), which they reveal in the human soul, where they reproduce it (*poiésis* = creation), and to which they thus lead at the foot of the axis that unites the worlds, symbolised by the spring, the stone, the oak, which appear at the beginning of Hesiod's *Theogony*. As in the Museum, where the products of that hearing—and therefore of Memory—are found, when one opens an inspired book, one also opens its temple, or mansion.

Although they appear as virgins, some have borne children by gods or men; yet the fates of these offspring point to spiritual, supercosmic generation as their true end; sometimes in tragic form, as in the case of Lino, son of Urania and a mortal, or of Apollo and Calliope – or Terpsichore – whom he slew after being challenged in song; others, as the exclusive offspring of love, such as Hymen, born of the union of Apollo and Calliope.

Though there were originally three in archaic times, their number has been fixed at nine, according to Hesiod's *Theogony*, to whom they themselves revealed this, and their own names are linked to their functions:

Clio: who presides over History, and who sings of the 'glory' of men and the

"celebration" of the gods, her attributes being the heroic trumpet and the water clock.

Euterpe: 'she who knows how to please', and who presides over music played on the flute and other wind instruments.

Thalia: comedy, "she who brings flowers", or "she who blossoms", also the name of one of the three Graces, depicted with the mask of comedy and a shepherd's crook.

Melpomene: tragedy, she who sings "what deserves to be sung", depicted with the tragic mask and the club of Hercules.

Terpsichore: music in general and dance, she who "loves dance", whose attribute is the zither.

Erato: lyric poetry and sacred songs, accompanied by the lyre and the bow, whose name derives from Eros, the first god to appear after Gaia, born of Chaos and the mother of the other gods.

Polymnia: the art of mime, she who inspires the union of the 'many hymns', and associated with her are rhetoric, eloquence and persuasion, depicted with a finger to her lips.

Urania: the 'celestial' one, astronomy, the contemplation of the harmony of the heavens, depicted with a tripod beside her.

Calliope: epic poetry, the one with the 'most beautiful' or 'true' voice, the one who reproduces the image of the primordial sound heard at the centre of every being, a place which only after a certain stage of the cycle is symbolically found at the summit of the Mountain (Helicon), which must be ascended by those who undertake the path of return, whereas Olympus is the abode of the immortal gods (the supra-individual states of being), a celestial mountain to which they themselves make their way from the former, after having bestowed gifts upon mankind, whilst leaving behind them an 'enchanting sound arising from their footsteps'.

54

MAGIC

We shall discuss the word 'magic' and its potential misunderstandings. Life itself, which is manifesting in every realm at this very moment, is likewise a permanent act of magic; that is to say, the reality in which we live is magical. In the same sense, our actions within it are naturally magical too, and humanity's participation in this process is an integral part of the process itself. Life and our existence are constantly unfolding, and we can participate in or influence them according to certain guidelines, related to specific rituals. For in the case of the rite, the same applies as with the symbol: whilst every manifestation is symbolic and life itself a perpetual rite, there are nevertheless certain specific symbols and rites which act upon us in a magical manner, provided that the person practising them is in the right state of mind to perform them and their intentions are sound and wholesome. The Hermetic Tradition works constantly with symbols and also employs certain 'operations' to bring these symbols to life

thus bringing them into the realm of action. Certain ‘methods’, gestures or forms of work, capable of fostering within us and in our surroundings specific situations and energies suitable for being shaped by a lucid will, rightly ordered within the triunity of Truth-Beauty-Good.

55

STUMBLES AND DIFFICULTIES

No doubt readers who have been following us closely will have encountered a variety of difficulties throughout this course. This is typical of any learning process, and is exacerbated in a field such as this, where we sometimes go against many of the ways of seeing characteristic of contemporary humanity and the society it has shaped (and in which we have been raised), a society that does not believe in the reality of the Spirit, nor in other possibilities of creation and humanity, save those strictly linked to statistical verification, empirical analysis, and exclusively visible and phenomenal manifestations. In this sense, our interest in occult and spiritual matters may create difficulties for us in relation to our surroundings, which will not always understand our vocation, or may believe us to be deluded or even irrational. This is compounded by our own internal struggles and the emergence of doubts, shortcomings, latent and unknown passions that arise, hesitations, phobias, obsessions, etc., which lie deep within oneself and which begin to awaken – in the wise economy of the Universe – just as other areas are illuminated by the light provided by knowledge. Symbols both reveal and conceal.

56

DANCE

Since the dawn of time, and universally among all peoples, dance has appeared as an expression of the human spirit and as a natural act within it. Always linked to music and song, as an indissoluble rhythmic trilogy, it constitutes a spontaneous gesture that articulates with the universal rhythm. This ‘falling into rhythm’, this ‘keeping time’ with the cosmos, is the essence and origin of dance, whose choreography and circular movements are inspired by the order of the planets and their effects and correspondences in the physical world. Man, the dancer, is the intermediary between heaven and earth, and his steps repeat and represent the primordial cosmogony to which he immediately assigns a repetitive and ritualistic character. Thanks to these gestures and ideal figures, or symbolic ‘patterns’, and to total surrender to the dance, the human being is transported to another world, to another mental space, where their active participation in the present, through movement, enables them to connect with a single, unique wave, or vibration, shared by the whole of creation. When this happens, one has grasped the magical meaning of life, of which one is a part.

57

THE SHIP

The nave, by virtue of its structure, appears as a symbolic image of the cosmos. Its central mast represents the Axis of the World, running from the zenith to the nadir,

and the crow's nest, which often encircles it from above, corresponds to the 'eye of the dome' in cathedrals and all buildings constructed according to the same cosmic model. Note that the interior space of a Christian church is also called a nave, this being precisely one of the emblems of Catholic pontiffs, also known as 'shepherd and navigator'. Likewise, the nave is oriented according to the four cardinal points: the bow-to-stern direction indicates the north-south vertical axis, and the starboard-to-port direction the east-west horizontal axis. It is also an image of the Ark floating on the surface of the Lower Waters, containing the seeds of a new cycle, which is why it is also associated with the chalice, the womb, and by extension with the heart and the cavern.

We should recall that the old sailors' motto: 'To live is not necessary, to sail is necessary', perfectly illustrates the profound meaning of navigation, of journeying through the Lower Waters in search of the Centre, symbolised by the mythical island or continent of origins. Indeed, life has no meaning, no 'direction', if it is not conceived as an adventure in pursuit of Knowledge, for which it is necessary, as the *I Ching* states, to cross the 'Great Waters', or the 'Sea of Passions' inherent in human individuality, as affirmed in Hinduism and, generally speaking, in all traditions.

58

THE COLUMNS AND THE DOOR

Columns are clearly symbols of the axis. They express the idea of vertical ascent, linking Earth and Heaven. When there are two columns topped by an arch or keystone, the latter symbolises Heaven, whilst the rectangle they form symbolises Earth. The doorway is also a schematic representation of the entire structure of the temple, particularly evident in the porticos of Christian cathedrals and monasteries. That semicircle of the arch symbolising Heaven is found in the chancel or apse, which is the projection onto the horizontal base plane of the dome or vault. And the rest of the temple, from the doorway to the altar, represents the Earth.

The doorway (framed by the two columns), with its dual function of separating and connecting two spaces (the profane space and the sacred space), is linked to the rites of 'transit' or 'passage', which in turn are connected to the mysteries of Initiation, constituting the mysteries of life and death. This is a fundamental symbolism found, in various forms, in all traditions.

The two columns symbolise the dual current of cosmic energy—active-passive, masculine-feminine, rigour and grace—which governs the process of universal creation in all its manifestations. To cross the threshold of the Temple-Cosmos is to be penetrated by this dual energy which, when properly harmonised, will lead us, through a regenerative journey in stages, to the exit through another door, this time a small one (the "narrow gate" of the Gospel, or "eye of the needle" as it is called in the Hindu tradition), situated in the "keystone", and therefore at the very apex of the dome. "I am the Gate," says Jesus Christ, "and whoever enters through me goes to the Father." The entrance gate to the temple, and the one

symbolically at the apex of the dome, are respectively, and using the symbolism of Greco-Roman antiquity, the ‘gate of men’ and the ‘gate of the gods’, the two zodiacal gates of Cancer and Capricorn. Through the “gate of men” one is born or enters the cosmos; through the “gate of the gods” one leaves it, entering the supra-cosmic reality, beyond Being, unconditioned by any law of space-time, and of which nothing can be said.

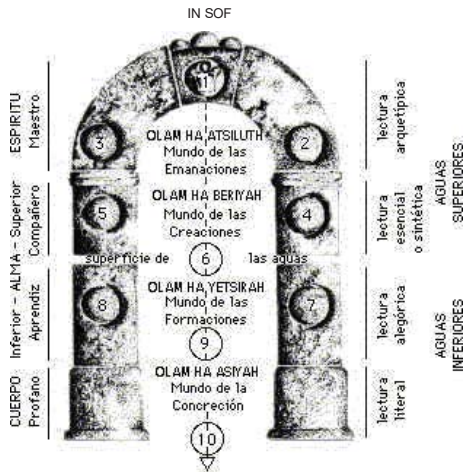
Through its connection with the initiatory cave, the temple can be likened to the body of the Great Mother, in her dual telluric and cosmic aspects. The two columns are also the two legs of the Mother in labour, in whose womb the neophyte, coming from the world of ‘profane darkness’, dies to his former condition, being reborn into true Life. This is naturally a birth in the sphere of the soul, the birth of the New Man who dwells within each of us.

Through Initiation, the cosmos, with all its worlds and planes, appears as the true home or dwelling of the human being, in which he no longer feels a stranger or an outsider, for he has died to the old man and has reintegrated himself into the beating of the universal rhythm, of which he is a part.

59

KABBALAH

We have previously discussed the symbolism of the columns and the gate. We now wish to apply this symbolism to our diagram of the *Sephirotic Tree*, or Kabbalistic Tree of Life:



60

KABBALISTIC MYTHOLOGY

All peoples, since the most remote antiquity, have preserved the reality of myth as an essential component of their conception of the world, their cosmogony and theogony. However far back we go in the history of traditional civilisations, we always find in them a rich profusion of tales and legends relating to mythical beings who serve as a link between Earth and Heaven, between what is below and what is above. The Kabbalistic tradition also preserves a great number of mythical deeds linked to the descent to Earth of celestial, angelic or spiritual energies. Thus, in Kabbalah the name *Metatron* is frequently encountered, identified with the Archangel Michael, also called the 'Prince of the Celestial Hosts'.

Kabbalah regards *Metatron* as the active and spiritual principle of *Kether*, the Unity, who, with the divine hosts under his command (the *Sefirot* of cosmic construction), wages war against the powers of evil and darkness (which constitute his own dark and inverted reflection, the 'crusts', "dregs" or *kelifoth*), dispelling doubt and ignorance from the heart of man, whilst simultaneously enriching it through the spiritual influence they impart. In some depictions of Christian and Hermetic iconography, this mythical battle can be seen in the figures of the Archangel Michael and the angelic hosts, fighting against the demons and Satan, the 'prince of this world', according to the well-known Gospel expression.

With the same meaning, but on a human level, we find the knight Saint George battling the earthly Dragon, a symbol of the lower passions and of "chaos". Indeed, the spear or sword (symbols of the axis) of St George piercing the monster's body suggests the 'penetration' of celestial, vertical and ordering ideas into that 'chaos'. This variant of the myth is analogous to the struggle that man undertakes in the quest for Knowledge, which gives him the possibility of experiencing a mythical process identical to that of those very cosmic and telluric, celestial and infernal energies, in a constant struggle and reconciliation.

Related in a certain way to the origins of the Hermetic Tradition, and closely linked to what we have been saying, is the myth of the 'fallen angels', which is likewise recounted in the biblical Genesis. Viewed from the perspective of Esoteric Science—which seeks to resolve opposites, and therefore excludes, as insufficient, the merely moral and sentimental, as well as overly literal interpretations of things, which are indeed included in the merely religious and exoteric perspective—the 'fall of the angels' represents, above all, a symbol of the descent of spiritual influences into the very heart of life and human nature.

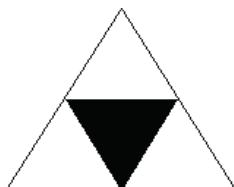
Certain angels fell, consumed by the love they felt for the daughters of men, whom, it is said, they 'found fair and beautiful'. From their union were born semi-divine beings (the mythical ancestors), who revealed to mankind the theurgical, magical and natural sciences and arts—that is to say, all those disciplines which, as we already know, form part of the sacred texts of the *Hermetica* and the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

The mountain, together with the stone (a reduced form of the mountain) and the tree, with which it is associated, is a natural symbol of the 'Axis of the World'. As it is in reality an elevation or protrusion of the earth, the imaginal structure of the sacred man sees in the mountain a symbol of his own nature, which aspires vertically towards the higher or celestial. In general, all mountains have this meaning, but there are some which, due to certain spatial correspondences related to sacred topography, are 'charged' with spiritual influences. These are the so-called 'Holy' or 'Sacred' Mountains, the dwelling place of spiritual entities. Hence, many temples and sanctuaries (such as, for example, the Greek Parthenon) were built on the summits of certain mountains, that is, where the Earth seems to touch the Sky.

Likewise, the mountain, in terms of its structure, is an archetype of the temple, which is particularly evident in the Egyptian and pre-Columbian pyramids and in the Babylonian *ziggurats*. In this regard, it is significant that Dante, in the Divine Comedy, places the Earthly Paradise, or Garden of Eden (of which every temple is a symbolic image), on the summit of a mountain, namely the 'Polar Mountain', "Celestial" or "Mythical", common to many traditional peoples, as is the case with Mount *Meru* among the Hindus, *Alborj* among the ancient Persians, Sinai and *Moriah* among the Hebrews, Mount *Qaf* among the Arabs, or Mount *Uluru* (or "Ayers Rock") among the Australian Aborigines, etc. The association of the mountain with Paradise suggests its primordial nature, for it, or its equivalent in any tradition, is regarded as the mythical beginning or origin of humanity (the 'Golden Age'), when all men without exception shared in Knowledge and Truth. Paradise was also the seat of the Great Universal Tradition, the guardian of doctrine and perennial wisdom, and every sacred mountain, like Eden, is the symbol of the Centre of the World. But from a certain point onwards, and due to adverse cyclical conditions, Knowledge ceased to belong to all mankind, remaining in the possession of only a few minorities, who, in order to safeguard and preserve it through the ages, created traditional cultures, shaped by sacred rites and symbols. Knowledge withdrew into itself, into the heart of the mountain, that is to say, into the cave, a place which, by its very location, is hidden and protected.

For this reason, the 'supra-terrestrial' world became, in a sense, the 'underworld'. It became invisible. It went into hiding, but it did not disappear. The dark hollow of the cave replaced the brightness of the mountain peak. Truth, which in earlier times was proclaimed far and wide and was on everyone's lips, became a secret perceived only in the innermost depths. The cave (like the egg) is also a symbol of the cosmos, a 'Centre of the World' just like the mountain. But just as on the mountain it manifests itself in all its development and breadth, in full view of all, in the cave the Centre remains invisible, virtual and potential. The temple is likewise a cave, although this is better represented by the crypt, situated in many cathedrals beneath the Altar, that is, on the same perpendicular axis that extends from the 'keystone', or the apex. In the sacred cavern, hierophanies take place and the mysteries of Initiation are celebrated, as well as the 'revelations' and 'apparitions' of the divinity. Let us recall that Jesus Christ is born in a

stable, the equivalent of the cavern. Furthermore, the very same traditional symbolic scheme used to represent the cavern is identical to that of the heart and the chalice, that is to say, an equilateral triangle with the apex pointing downwards, evoking the image of a vessel that collects spiritual effluvia. The geometric symbol of the mountain is also a triangle, but with the apex pointing upwards.



There is here an application of this symbol that completes what has been said so far, and that is that, as the cave is inside the mountain, we can see that the union of the two forms the well-known symbol of the ‘Seal of Solomon’ or ‘Star of David’. This is, as we already know, the symbol of analogy, which makes what is below complementary to what is above, and vice versa. Therefore, the inverted triangle is a reflection of the other, just as the microcosm is a reflection of the macrocosm, or as the relative reality of the manifested is a reflection of the Absolute Reality of the Unmanifested.

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THE SYMBOL OF THE STONE

Among building materials, the most important is naturally stone. But this, like everything that forms part of the Temple, had for the builders of traditional civilisations who used this material (since it is known that prior to this, buildings were constructed of wood), a very precise symbolic meaning, which is what gives it all its importance from a sacred point of view.

Stone expresses two very distinct aspects. On the one hand, and due to its roughness and sharp edges, it symbolises the coarse and imperfect nature of the profane man. On the other hand, thanks to its solidity and stability, it reflects, more than anything else, the unchanging presence of God within Creation. And this is precisely what causes a particular stone to be venerated as sacred. This is the case with the betyl-oracles, which were generally meteorites, or stones ‘descended from heaven’, and thus associated with lightning and light. We might add that ‘bethel’ derives from *Beith-El* (meaning ‘House of God’), the name given to the place where Jacob laid his head and had the dream in which he saw angels ascending and descending a ladder that linked Heaven and Earth. (That very word, *Beith-El*, later became *Beith-Lehem*, or Bethlehem, the ‘House of Bread’, and designated the city in which Christ was to be born, the Word descended into the bosom of earthly substance).

Hence, there were periods and cultures in which it was strictly

to carve stones intended for special worship, as these were considered the very expression of the undifferentiated (raw) and virginal substance of the divine nature. But this is not the case with temples which, like cathedrals, require stones that are completely squared, polished and worked with hammer and chisel to ensure their solidity. The stone would no longer express that undifferentiated virginity, but rather the amorphous chaos of the profane, which needs to be ordered by the rules and methods of the Craft.



By polishing the rough stone, the apprentice builder was performing a ritual act and gesture upon himself. The stone was himself, and its transformation into a carved, cubic stone symbolised the qualitative transmutation of his entire being.

63

ARCHITECTURE

Architecture, linked to the art of building, arose simultaneously as a material necessity and a spiritual necessity. As a material necessity, it was imperative, at a certain point in history, to seek shelter and protection from the elements and from all manner of dangers and adverse conditions. And as a spiritual necessity, because every building, whatever the materials and architectural models used, had and has a significance linked to religious and sacred worship. An example of the latter is the Temple or Sanctuary itself, of which we have already spoken, although it was also, and is present wherever a traditional culture is still preserved, in the dwelling itself, in which the hearth or central fire, analogous to the Altar, stands out. In both cases, the art of building is based on the contemplation of a primordial divine act: the Creation of the World. The physical cosmos, the creation of the divine Architect, provided the human architect with the model for his own dwelling. Heaven and Earth constitute the upper and lower parts of the building. In this sense, since the concrete reality of the cosmos is a manifestation of the invisible worlds, the construction of the family and cultural home must fulfil a similar function, that is, to serve as a vessel and support for the creative energies of the Universe, embodying them in the configuration of its layout and in each of its parts and elements. And we have already seen that these energies are symbolically expressed through numerical and geometric modules, closely and harmoniously linked to one another. Cathedrals and monasteries, for example, are true compendiums of universal life, where the various realms of nature, the intermediate world, and the spiritual or angelic world are represented in stone; in short, the 'Book of the Universe'. Hence, the master architects and the workers under their command, divided into various ranks,

had a perfect understanding of metaphysics, ontology, cosmology and the natural sciences. The very tools and elements used in construction are symbolic as well as practical, and among them the compass, the square, the spirit level, the plumb line, the ruler, the trowel, the hammer and the chisel are particularly noteworthy.

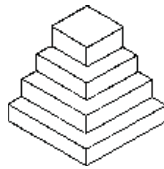
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THE HIERARCHY

One of the greatest errors of modern man, a child of contemporary society, is to believe in a supposed equality that is entirely absent from life and nature itself, since all 'kingdoms' and species are perfectly hierarchical. This egalitarian approach denies any possibility of self-improvement, as it attributes to others the petty mediocrity of the environment in which one lives and which one embodies, along with the personal burdens and nightmares that constitute the individual existence of those who make up a desacralised society. Thus, an image of one's own mediocrity is projected without giving a moment's thought to the experience, wisdom, age, education and travels of others with whom one seeks to equate oneself in an absurd comparison arising from the act of 'believing' in an 'equality' that is taken as a genuine 'good' in itself, and even as civic and democratic progress.

It is common to see in towns and provinces that people who stand out for some reason are treated as if the ground were being 'pulled out from under them' or 'the floor were being sawn out from under them'. This latter image is very vivid: one must 'bring the other down to one's own level' when one cannot or does not wish to rise to theirs.

There is no greater equality than that which we humans possess: the capacity to harbour the divine within each being—a potential that all human beings, without exception, possess, and which constitutes what truly unites us. That is to say, equality before and within the Universal Being, in which all beings are in some way participants, and the freedom to achieve union with that Universal Being which has given the individual being a common Origin and Destiny.



[Home Page](#)



The aptly named ‘martial arts’ offer the possibility of permanent achievement in the quest for balance through action and reaction. This dance, a reflection of the cosmic, allows for defence and attack and the rhythmic exchange of energies between friend and foe, self and other, in which one of them must necessarily prevail so that universal harmony may be perpetuated through the disharmony of the victor and the vanquished.

Traditional martial arts have never sought the annihilation of the adversary; on the contrary, they typically utilise the enemy’s energy to leave them disarmed and thus defenceless and surrendered, despite their fury.

Some strategists assert that a good defence consists of a good attack and put forward compelling arguments in its favour. Similarly, in war, the victors are sometimes the vanquished. One cannot enter battle with the omnipotence of one who disregards the laws of war, and even less so if one lacks the conviction to win.

There are two great principles in strategy that can be the source of a warrior’s flawlessness: a) do not underestimate the adversary; b) do not show your weapons to the enemy (*Tao Te Ching*). Furthermore, the warrior must know that his emotions are secondary provided his cause is just. In the choice of that cause and in the knowledge that this entails lies the key to ultimate success. A third rule might also be listed: leave the necessary traces so that they are forced to confront you. The pursuer is being pursued. Whilst this is not the end of our studies – which aspire to metaphysics – these warnings are nonetheless useful on certain occasions.

In antiquity, no clear distinctions were drawn between Science, Art and Philosophy. Similarly, medieval alchemists described themselves as both artists and philosophers, and when referring to their activities, they called them Science. In this way, they linked it to Sacred and traditional Science, which did not exclude cosmological disciplines or metaphysical meditation, nor ritual and prayer, as can be seen in all the documents they produced, which unanimously attest to this.

Science, as the ancients understood it, had nothing to do with a literal method, as our contemporaries conceive it (this idea having originated with Descartes in the *Discourse on Method*, which appeared only in the 17th century XVII) and even less did they envisage its replacement by ‘technique’ or ‘techniques’—approaches that are exclusively empirical and rational, in contrast to the universality of true Science. So-called modern science, based on statistics and the verification of the same phenomenon under ‘ideal’ circumstances, is by no means exact, as the medieval alchemists well knew (who repeated the same experiment hundreds of times, knowing that the circumstances were always different, in order to finally obtain tangible results of natural transmutation), for it is well known that the same spatial-

do not occur in the same indefinite manner in a supposed immobile, cold and unreal world (which is mistakenly understood as 'mathematical'), and the best proof of this is the careful observation of the earth and the sky, of the macrocosmic and microcosmic, always in continuous motion and perpetual generation of new forms of life.

On the other hand, we wish to emphasise that this 'modern' science to which we are referring is in truth an 'outdated' framework from the 19th century, which paradoxically remains in force in official academic institutions. However, the findings of the most modern science, which have emerged over the past 60 years or so, with a conception entirely different from mechanical rationalism, align with the conceptions of antiquity and describe a cosmology analogous to that of the traditional doctrines of all places and times, as we shall provide some examples in subsequent series and sections.

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THE ALTAR

Architecturally, the Altar or Ara is the 'foundation stone' of the temple. Although in practice, and from a microcosmic perspective, the work of material construction and the process of Knowledge proceeds from the bottom up, from multiplicity to the Archetypal Unity, in reality one must always bear in mind the metaphysical perspective, which regards the cosmogonic process as a transition from that very Unity to multiplicity, or from top to bottom.

In this sense, the foundation stone of the altar, being situated at the very centre of the square or rectangle of the base, is the direct and vertical projection of the keystone or capstone, which constitutes the true keystone of the temple's vault. In turn, the four foundation stones of the corners, or angles, of the building are so many horizontal projections or reflections of the foundation stone. This yields a symbolic scheme in which the altar occupies an intermediate and central position between the earthly and the celestial worlds.

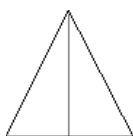
The altar is, therefore, at the Centre of the World, that is to say, at the ideal and symbolic geometric point where the break in level occurs that connects man with the higher realms and invisible realities. In this respect, the word 'altar' means 'high', an elevated place, which links it to the mountain, and more specifically to the Sacred Mountain.

In mountain temples, such as certain pre-Columbian pyramids and Babylonian *ziggurats*, the altars are situated at the summit, symbolising the idea of a privileged place close to Heaven. In Christian churches, the steps (degrees) that raise and separate the high altar from the rest of the nave have this same meaning: the Christian altar, like its predecessor, the Hebrew altar, is symbolically at the summit of the mountain of Paradise. If the church is a living organism, the altar is properly its heart. In it is concentrated and expanded, as if in the systole and diastole of the heart, all the subtle energy that gives cohesion to the building as a whole. The altar is the sensitive point, the vital nexus that brings together the horizontal and vertical energies of the church, through which, by perceiving them in their very nature, man is led to partake of the unadorned beauty that

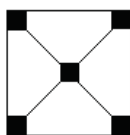
emanates from it, revealing the balance and harmony of creation.

Hence, in the Temple of Jerusalem – built by the wise King Solomon – the Ark of the Covenant, within which the divine effluvia were symbolically gathered, was placed upon the stone called *Shetiyah*, equivalent to the altar.

The altar is also the stone of sacrifice, where the sacred act par excellence is consummated: the ritual death of the old man, and the birth and resurrection to true Life. On the sacrificial stone, the human soul, having reached the centre of itself—that is, ‘union’ with the Spirit—is crucified and offered to the gods, or to the divinity, thereby establishing through this primordial act a covenant, or a common, indissoluble bond.



Perspectiva
pizamidal



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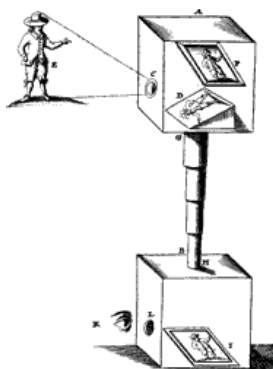
68

DREAMS

In all traditional cosmogonies, dreams have always been regarded as intermediary vehicles between concrete, sensory reality and spiritual, metaphysical reality. This is because dreams belong precisely to the subtle intermediate state, that is, to the plane of *Yetsirah* or of formations, thus sharing in the duality inherent to that plane, which makes them capable of presenting a dark and inferior aspect, linked to the organic and consequently to the plane of *Asiyah*, and another aspect, on the contrary, luminous and superior, related to the plane of *Beriyah* and the world of ideas. Needless to say, it is the first of these two aspects to which Freudian psychoanalysis devotes all its attention, confining itself exclusively to the phenomenal and delving deeply into it, whilst it is the second that is truly important and significant, for the images constituting its content are nothing but ideas clothed in mental forms, and may therefore be regarded, in effect, as authentic symbols that convey and reveal what lies beyond the individual and, of course, beyond the phenomenal; that is to say, they open up certain possibilities for inner realisation, with the advantage that the being in the dream state is freed from certain conditions implicit in the bodily—and therefore spatial—modality of its individuality. We have the example of Jacob’s well-known ‘dream’, during which he sees angels (the higher states) ascending and descending a ladder, which is the Axis of the World linking earth and heaven, not to mention the importance accorded to certain dreams in all initiatory traditions, and very particularly in shamanic traditions throughout the world, in which the aim is almost always to receive a divine decree or a revelation granted by spirits, numina or gods.

If life is an illusion according to Hinduism and Buddhism, and the Hermetic masters affirm this, what then is reality? And likewise, what is this fiction? If man is a stranger on this earth, and lives as such when he begins an inner work alien to others, what is the criterion of truth or falsehood? What subtle threshold is crossed between one way of seeing and another? For whilst what is most strange about contemporary man (of whom we are still a part) is his way of clinging to and identifying with things, those who allow themselves this inner or otherworldly attitude are equally strange to their surroundings. If a door is opened and a step is taken forward, things are bathed in a different light and take on a different meaning. If we close that door and take a step back, those same things appear familiar in their mundane, everyday context. Reality or fiction?

Allowing oneself to see is something punished by a society that does not aspire to such projects. From the depths of one's heart, one wonders who is right. But is reason the appropriate instrument, or the tool that allows us to elucidate these personal experiences? Or is it simply that experience justifies all our actions?



[fig. 7](#)

Of those whose existence is still remembered, Greek civilisation is perhaps one of those that harbours the greatest number of gods and myths. Indeed, the Greek pantheon (a word derived from *pan*, 'all', and *theos*, 'god') is truly rich and extensive, comparable only to that of Hindu and pre-Columbian cultures, particularly the Aztec and Mayan. The very name 'myth' is of Greek origin, and its root is the same as that of the word 'mystery', both deriving from the word *myein*, which means 'to close one's mouth', 'to keep silent', undoubtedly alluding to the inner silence in which the secrets of initiation are received. From the Orphic mysteries, through the Eleusinian initiations in which Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato participated, to the melting pot of cultures that was Alexandria in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, Greek mythology nourished the sacred universe of

all the cultures of the Western Mediterranean, particularly that of the Roman Empire.

Every science and every art, as well as every manual, rational and intellectual activity of humankind, was under the protection and influence of a god, muse or astral genius, which resulted in a harmonious coexistence with the ordering forces of the cosmos. The Greeks, like any traditional people, understood that the gods and invisible entities were modes or forms of existence, and encompassed the entire varied range of essential and archetypal possibilities of human behaviour and thought. In this sense, a profound kinship unites gods and men: all arise from the union of Uranus (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth). Thus, the Olympian gods represent the higher states of man, and men the earthly states of the gods. And this is, once again, an application of the law of analogy, which ensures that 'as above, so below; as below, so above', forming a harmonious and orderly whole.

In Greco-Roman traditions, the intimate relationships between the gods and men have an ambivalent character of reconciliation and struggle, clearly linked to the idea of heroic endeavour and the reconquest of immortality by the latter; the legends of the heroes serve merely to represent the very process of Initiation.

This is exemplified by the well-known myth of Ulysses, recounted in Homer's *Odyssey*, who, after a labyrinthine journey by sea and land, fraught with dangers and vicissitudes, finally reaches his 'homeland', the island of Ithaca. Likewise, Hercules (see [No. 15](#)), a solar hero, who, after undergoing various trials and labours, manages to enter the Garden of the Hesperides, another name given to the Centre of the World.

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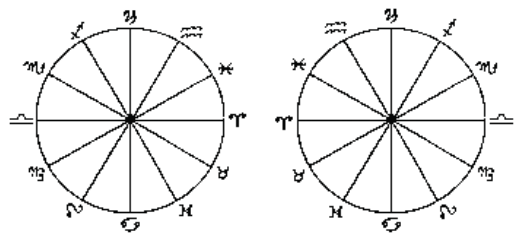
ASTROLOGY

All the planets make an apparent journey through the zodiacal circle, and the duration of that journey is what determines the particular cycle of each one, the cycles of the two so-called 'luminaries', the Sun and the Moon, being clear, as they produce the annual and monthly cycles. The influences these planets exert on Earth vary depending on which zodiacal house they occupy, as the qualities of these signs may be compatible, indifferent or hostile to the various planetary influences.

Over the course of a year, the celestial wheel of the zodiacal constellations completes a 360-degree rotation, thus completing a cycle.

The apparent movement of this wheel is in the opposite direction to the Sun's movement across the zodiac, which is retrograde. Following the cyclical model we have been working on, the diagrams below show, on the left, the wheel of the signs in the sky as seen when looking north. Capricorn corresponds to winter (the season begins when the Sun enters this sign), Aries to spring, Cancer to summer and Libra to autumn. The second diagram shows the zodiacal wheel with a solar orientation, that is, as

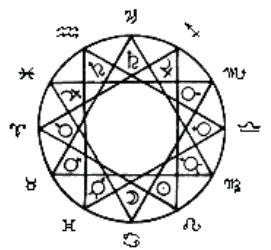
an observer looking towards the meridian would see it. Capricorn and Cancer are in the same position, but the apparent movement of the signs is clockwise.



As, due to the Earth’s rotation, the zodiacal wheel completes a full revolution in 24 hours, we can also relate this same symbolism to the cycle of the day. In this case, Capricorn is symbolically associated with midnight, Aries with dawn, Cancer with summer and Libra with dusk.

We have already noted that, for our astrological studies and calculations, we shall use only the seven traditional planets, excluding Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, as these three have been introduced only recently and studies concerning them are incomplete.

Each planet has one or two zodiacal signs that constitute its domicile, and it is said that they rule or govern these constellations as their influences are harmonious and complementary. As can be seen from the following diagram, the luminaries have a single domicile, whilst the other five planets have two, one diurnal and one nocturnal:



If the planet is in the sign opposite to that of its domicile, it is said to be in ‘exile’, its influences being contrary or unfavourable. Furthermore, when the planetary influence is in harmony with that of the sign in which it is situated, the planet is said to be in ‘exaltation’, and when it is in the opposite sign, its energies are hostile and the planet is said to be in ‘fall’. This is better understood from the following table:

PLANETS	DOMICILE	EXILE	EXALTATION	DEPLETION
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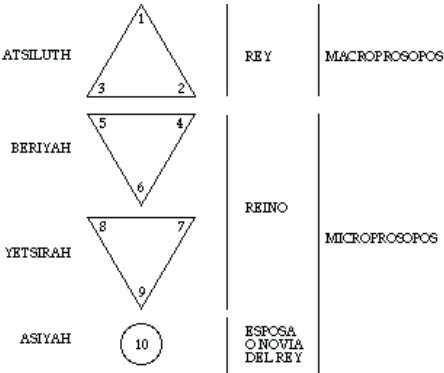
SUN	Leo	Aquarius	Aries	Libra
MOON	Cancer	Capricorn	Taurus	Scorpio
MERCURY	Gemini-Virgo	Sagittarius-Pisces	Aquarius	Leo
VENUS	Taurus-Libra	Scorpio-Aries	Pisces	Virgo
MARS	Aries-Scorpio	Libra-Taurus	Capricorn	Cancer
JUPITER	Sagittarius-Pisces	Gemini-Virgo	Cancer	Capricorn
SATURN	Capricorn-Aquarius	Cancer-Leo	Libra	Aries

Some astrologers, such as Ptolemy, place Mercury’s exaltation in Virgo and its fall in Pisces.

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KABBALAH

Division of the four planes of the Tree of Life in correspondence with other symbolic languages found in sacred Hebrew texts:



The Hebrew terms *Arik Anpin* and *Zeir Anpin*, *Macroprosopos* and *Microprosopos* in Greek, mean, respectively, ‘Greater Face’ and ‘Lesser Face’. These are separated by an immense chasm called the Abyss (*Tehom*). Between them is usually placed the ‘invisible’ *sefirah*, or *non-sefirah*, *Daath*, Knowledge. Indeed, in the Tree of Life, *Daath* is in the middle pillar, right between *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) and *Binah* (Intelligence), for it is said that it arises from the union or combination of these two *sefirot*, constituting the very knowledge that Unity (*Kether*) has of itself, which is transmitted to the remaining seven *sefirot* (the *Microprosopos*) through the channels or paths that connect them, giving rise to creation itself.

73

THE PILGRIMAGES

The adventure of Knowledge is often described as a journey or pilgrimage. 'A journey of a thousand miles begins at your feet'. Essentially, the pilgrimage is linked to the search for the Centre of the World, where one establishes an inner connection with one's higher states of being. It is about reaching the Celestial Homeland, which is man's true abode, for, as various traditions state, man is a stranger on this earth. The word 'pilgrim' means nothing other than that: a stranger. 'You are not of this world'. Thus, from the moment we sense that we do not belong 'here', life itself, with its vicissitudes, struggles, passions, lights and shadows, becomes an exemplary symbol of that inner quest. From that moment on, any event or occurrence will always reveal something; it will become meaningful and symbolic.

More specifically, so-called pilgrimages to holy or sacred places are regarded as stages in the initiatory process, linked to the idea of the labyrinth and of 'getting lost in order to find oneself'.

The symbolic trials of Initiation are also referred to as "journeys", in which, in addition to the spiritual influence they convey, the inhibitions and negative tendencies of the ego are ritually psychodramatised, exhausting them as they emerge into the open. Despite the many difficulties, the pilgrim, on their inner and outer journey, travels an archetypal path, where the symbol is experienced (ritualised) and revealed to them with all the power of its ordering energy, enabling them to simultaneously perceive the reality of a mythical time, in which the wondrous becomes contemporary with horizontal reality.

Everything takes place on the 'wheel of life', mirror and receptacle of the energies of the cosmos, which the pilgrim must, in effect, recognise within himself in order to reach the centre or immovable heart of the wheel, where identification with the Universal takes place and the return to his true origin.

74

ASTROLOGY

To perform astrological calculations, in addition to noting the influences exerted by the planets on the various zodiacal signs, it is also important to observe the relationships they have with one another, given that there is a constant interplanetary connection, as we can see in the *Sephirotic Tree* and in the symbolism of mythology.

When drawing up a horoscope, it is also necessary to take into account that the planets interact in one way or another depending on their positions within the zodiacal wheel and the distances and proportions at which they stand in relation to one another. This determines what is known in astrology as planetary 'aspects', among which the following stand out:

Conjunction: two planets are in 'conjunction' when they are together, at the same degree of longitude on the ecliptic. This is generally considered a constructive influence.

Opposition: when they are 180 degrees apart, dividing the circle in half,

the aspect is the inverse of the ‘conjunction’ and is called an ‘opposition’, an aspect generally considered ‘malefic’, causing friction.

Trine: this aspect is formed when two planets are separated by 120 degrees, dividing the circle into three parts. It is considered the most favourable of all, and brings together two planets in signs belonging to the same element.

Square: if the separation between the two planets is 90 degrees, they are said to be in a square, an aspect judged to be the most unfavourable, although it is often nothing more than a severe test that must be overcome.

Sextile: this is the aspect that occurs when the separation is 60 degrees, considered ‘beneficial’, generating activity and change. In this case, the planets are in harmonious signs.

Quincunx: this aspect occurs at a separation of 150 degrees and is generally considered disjointed and contradictory.

There are also other aspects of lesser importance, which we have omitted to mention. The distances given here indicate the aspect at its exact and ideal point. The influence may still occur even if the distances differ slightly from those indicated (sometimes by as much as 5 to 10 degrees). It should also be noted that the classifications given to the various aspects, as ‘beneficial’ or ‘malefic’, are general in nature, and that to determine them precisely it is necessary to observe the zodiacal chart as a whole. A ‘malefic’ aspect may result in ‘benefits’ and vice versa.

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THE RITE

On several occasions we have spoken of the rite as a basic component of symbolic knowledge, and therefore of life itself, which in the indefinite variety of its ever-changing forms is the permanent reiteration of an unchanging and eternal archetypal order. Indeed, the word ‘rite’, which comes from the Latin *ritus*, itself derived from the Sanskrit *rita* (root *rt*), means nothing other than ‘order’. In truth, the rite is the symbol itself in action; thus, its constant reiteration in all the acts of our lives allows the gradual understanding of ideas – conveyed by symbols – to eventually become incorporated into our entire being, thereby marking the process that leads us to Knowledge. Hence, when we speak of rites, we are not referring to ‘magical’, civil or religious ceremonies. The initiatory rites of certain traditions are still alive, although access to them is difficult. Some religions or traditional institutions preserve the symbols – and even the rites – but these lack any true content and are as though empty, their essence and esotericism, that is to say, their reality and significance, remaining unknown. For the Hermetic Tradition, rites are the studies carried out based on Hermetic models, the concentration this entails, the meditation it promotes, the practices that bring about vision and the imaginal, the ceaseless prayer of the heart as a permanent invocation, the contemplation produced by the beauty and harmony of the

nature and the cosmos, and the auxiliary works aimed at attaining Knowledge. In this regard, we wish to recall that there is an identity between being and knowledge. Man is what he knows. What else could he be but the sum of himself? To be is to know. Namely: since we are what we know, the constant repetition of the rite, which sustains knowledge of other realities, worlds or planes of the Universal Being, is a guarantee of identification with that Being and its knowledge, through a hierarchical path, populated by spirits, gods, colours and mediating energies.

End of Module I

Table of Contents Module I



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INTRODUCTION TO SACRED SCIENCE

Agartha Programme

MODULE II

1

REVIEW

In the previous chapters, the reader has had the opportunity to see how this course is structured, where the interrelationships between the various disciplines of the Hermetic Tradition (Symbolism, Alchemy, Philosophy, Astrology, Numerology, Kabbalah, Theurgy, etc.) play a fundamental role in our studies. Indeed, just as with the evolution and development of any plant, the seed lies in potential within these opening pages, to which the reader must return constantly and cyclically, that is, with the characteristics of a ritual. It is worth noting that the repetition of this rite, the time devoted to it, and the concentration applied to it are directly proportional to the fruit obtained from it. At times we seem ready to undertake heroic feats, and yet we are unable, due to mental phantoms, to carry out simple tasks that require a consistent and persevering attitude. If the student is able to experience themselves as the subject of their experiments, supported by the Doctrine and the various disciplines through which the Tradition manifests itself, they will be able to obtain satisfactory results and beneficial dividends, whether physical, psychological or spiritual. Needless to say, these sciences and arts can only be utilised at the highest level, which in Kabbalah would be *Kether* in *Atsiluth* or even further, so to speak, that is, the supra-cosmic (which, incidentally, includes the 'supra-microcosmic').

The aim of this research is very lofty, and one must not confuse the metaphysical objectives with the psychological phenomena that may be observed along the way. The purposes of Sacred Science are truly profound. Life is a serious matter, despite the images that mental consumerism and the desacralisation of the world might lead one to assume.

Agartha constitutes an invisible network of wills, bound together by ties as real and indestructible as those that bind the very structure of the Cosmos, regarded as an archetypal model of manifestation. This chain of union conveys the message of the *Philosophia Perennis*, that is to say, of Sacred Science, which, being timeless, has been known to all the peoples of Antiquity, fragments of which still sustain and keep alive modern man himself (including Westerners and the inhabitants of large cities), even if he denies or is unaware of it, since the cultural roots of the arts and sciences derive from Metaphysical Principles and Eternal Ideas.

2 NOTE:

You have surely asked yourself many questions during the course of our programme. The I Ching or 'Book of Changes', a book of wisdom and a true Chinese oracle, states that the most difficult thing is to formulate

the questions to which one seeks answers. This is partly due to the multitude of questions one asks oneself regarding traditional subjects and everything one would like to know once and for all. It is also true that the answer is implicit in the question. Likewise, it is evident that if we turn to patience, the answers emerge of their own accord without the need to force the situation. We already know that the seed holds the potential of the tree, and that the tree can grow healthy and vigorous if it is watered consistently and the weeds that might hinder its development are cleared away.

3

KABBALAH

We have not yet discussed *En Sof* in our Programme (although we have mentioned it briefly), as we wished first to present the model of the Tree of Life and work with it, so that the student might become familiar with its structure whilst also exploring the various relationships it gives rise to, as well as with the letters and other specifically Kabbalistic images. We wish to recall that this model of the Tree corresponds exactly to *Adam Kadmon*, the total man, and we refer to him first in order to try to understand certain proportions that will lead us to the idea of what *En Sof* is for the Kabbalists. We are speaking of his measurements, called in Hebrew *Shiur Koma*, for Kabbalah identifies *Adam Kadmon* with the cosmos. ‘The height from the heels of this being is thirty million parasangs,’ it is stated laconically. But it is then explained that ‘one parasang of the Creator is three miles, one mile is ten thousand metres, and one metre is three empan, and one empan contains the entire world’.

Undoubtedly these measurements encompass all the possibilities of the Universe, whatever they may be. Well then, nevertheless the idea of *En Sof* surpasses, if one may put it that way, all these possibilities. With regard to the diagram of the Tree of Life, a model of the Cosmos, and the location of *En Sof* within it, we refer the reader to Module I, [No. 18](#).

As will be seen, his position is supra-cosmic; he is called the Ancient of the Ancients (*Deus Ignotus*). He cannot even be imagined by man. He expresses himself through the cosmos, through the celestial man, through the creator, who is but a residual point of his infinite nothingness. The word *Ain* (Nothingness), sometimes used by Kabbalists and the *Zohar* as synonymous with *En Sof*, conveys an idea of absolute emptiness. But this nothingness and this emptiness are not ‘something’ in the modern sense of the term, namely: something that can be perceived or expressed as a negation of something else. In truth, *En Sof* is nothing of which anything could be made, such is the Immeasurable Majesty of this Kabbalistic doctrine. Thus, the first three *sefirot* correspond to the Trinity of the Principles of the Universal Being, and therefore also to those of the individual being. They correspond to the celestial principles, which in turn generate the terrestrial ones, just as in constructive symbolism the dome and the base of the temple. This concerns the nature of God, if one may put it that way, which is synthesised in the Unity, to which God is assimilated. These states are supra-individual and are marked, in the diagram of the Tree of Life, as supra-cosmic, since they stand above the *sefirot* of ‘construction’ (cosmic). However, they are still determined by

the numbering assigned to them, beginning with Unity. Indeed, Unity is the synthesis in which the essence and meaning of the entirety of Creation can be found; but at the same time, this assumption of the Self (also called the Good and the One) is in turn the sole means of passage to other 'spaces', this time truly and authentically supra-individual and supra-cosmic (metaphysical), clearly designated in Kabbalah by the name *En Sof*, equivalent to Non-Being, of which one does not speak since by definition they are ineffable. This symbolisation of a succession of degrees of Knowledge is also implicit in the very layout of the Temple building, through the door, the labyrinth, the altar and the *Holy of Holies*, which delimit specific symbolic zones that are arranged from lesser to greater in the initiatory journey proposed by the structure.

4

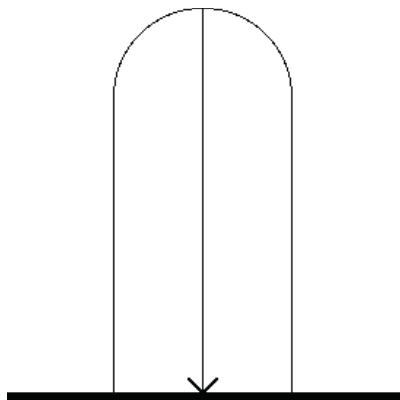
THE LEVELLING TOOL AND THE PLUMB LINE

The spirit level and plumb line occupy a prominent place when it comes to 'getting down to work' and laying the foundations of the building project. The spirit level is used to check that the base of the building is completely flat, thus preventing any unevenness or irregularities in the ground. The aim is for the structure to rise with its base perfectly horizontal, and all its parts levelled with one another, since any oversight in this regard would, sooner or later, lead to the collapse of the entire building. In turn, the plumb line plays a fundamental role, for it is thanks to it that the building rises vertically and perpendicularly. In this way, the spirit level and the plumb line relate to the horizontal (passive energy) and the vertical (active energy), and everything that has already been said about both symbols can be applied to the teachings derived from these two instruments (see Module I, [No. 33](#)). The union of the spirit level and the plumb line thus forms the symbol of the cross, which results from the intersection of a vertical axis and a horizontal axis, both of which, during the construction of the building, create its structure.

In the universal temple that is the visible cosmos, the upper end of the 'cosmic' plumb line is situated at the North Star (the zenith of the World), from which an imaginary – yet no less real – axis effectively descends, around which the entire universe revolves. In the temple itself, this plumb line is the perpendicular axis (whether represented or not) that falls from the tip of the 'keystone' to the centre of the nave's rectangle, where the Altar or Ara, the 'foundation stone', is situated. The plumb line is thus a symbol of the 'Axis of the World', that which, held by the hand of the Architect-builder, traverses the three worlds: Heaven, Earth and Hell, or the Underworld. In the subtle microcosm of man there also exists a vertical axis (called *sushumnâ* in the Hindu tradition) which traverses the various states of consciousness (symbolised by the *chakras* or 'wheels'), from the lower one, situated symbolically at the base of the spinal column, to the upper one, located at the 'crown' or cranial keystone.

This is closely related to the very process of Knowledge and Initiation, for the latter involves, as we know, a gradual awakening of these states of consciousness, analogous to those of the Universal Being. The plumb line here represents the symbol of the quest for

Truth that penetrates to the deepest recesses of our being, naturally with the aid of that inner level which compels us to total submission to the Higher Will that arises within us, and without which any attempt at spiritual seeking is a chimera. “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.” Or, recalling the Hermetic-Alchemical formula V.I.T.R.I.O.L., “Visit the Interior of the Earth (of yourself) and by Rectifying you will Find the Hidden Stone.”



5

IMAGES AND SYMBOLS

There is a natural and logical relationship between image and symbol. When it comes to symbols whose framework of expression is space, such as geometric, architectural and iconographic symbols, their connection with the image is obvious. And when they unfold over time, such as ritual and sacred music, poetry and the oral narratives of myths, these generate, simultaneously with their hearing, symbolic images and visions. And this is so because, as Aristotle already said, man knows through images; that is to say, his psychic and intellectual nature is particularly capable of understanding through symbolic representations. Likewise, the synthetic and universal language of symbolic images frees the psyche from the duality of all existential dialectics, where the purely mental and cerebral takes precedence over the true intellectual intuition that resides in the heart; this amounts to a regenerative purification whose aim is to restore to us the mental purity and virginal innocence of our origins; a transmutation of consciousness such that it harmonises perfectly with the being of the world and of things.

Traditional man also sees in the universe, and in everything that surrounds him, an externalisation of himself, an image of the world that dwells within him. This is because both, the cosmos and man, are made of the same substance, enlivened by the same Spirit. This certainty leads to an identification with the invisible forces and numinous energies that animate matter, to which they impart an intelligible form or structure, which will become the symbol or sign of those creative powers. Hence the

modern error of regarding the world as something flat and homogeneous, when in truth it contains within itself an inexhaustible variety of possibilities of being that constantly manifest the reality of the divine attributes. Whether veiled or evident, everything retains the imprint of the sacred, for as the *Zohar* says: 'the world subsists by the mystery'.

6

THE SYMBOL OF THE LADDER

The ladder, along with the tree, is one of the most prominent symbols of the World Axis, and also one of the most widespread across all traditions. Although we shall discuss this important symbol in greater detail later, relating it to the symbolism of passage, it suffices for now to say that the ladder is linked above all to the idea of movement of ascent and descent along that Axis, connecting the earth (and the underworld) with the heavens, and vice versa, through the different levels, worlds or states of being that make up the whole of universal manifestation, levels represented by the horizontal rungs that join the two vertical rails, which clearly correspond to the two side columns of the *Sephirotic Tree*, which can likewise be visualised as a ladder. Of these columns, one must be regarded as ascending and the other as descending, which takes place around the central axis or pillar of balance, which is the true axis. The latter recalls the symbol of the double spiral (present in the 'spiral' staircase), an illustration of the two currents of cosmic energy that wind around the central axis, just as we can observe in the Caduceus of Hermes-Mercury.

It should be added that the number of steps is normally seven, relating to the seven planetary heavens, and also to the seven virtues and the liberal arts and sciences, regarded as the rungs that allow one to ascend in a 'step-by-step' (effective) manner through the degrees of Knowledge. In this regard, we should recall that among the Native Americans and other archaic peoples still living today, the ascent and descent along the cosmic axis takes place via the ritual tree or pole, along which there are a series of notches representing the different worlds or states that must be traversed until reaching the summit or apex, which in turn corresponds to the 'eye of the dome' in architectural symbolism, through which the definitive exit from the cosmos and union with transcendent Reality takes place.

7

THE SYMBOL OF THE SWASTIKA

Among the symbolic representations of the Centre of the World, that of the swastika deserves special mention, for in addition to being an equivalent of the symbol of the cross and the wheel, and thus sharing in their general meanings, it features other variants that confirm our certainty that symbols are authentic vehicles of Knowledge.

As it has been found in the art of all traditional peoples since the most remote antiquity, the swastika is one of the symbols that refer directly to the Hyperborean or primordial Tradition. It is, in effect,

a cross, only that four lines are added to its ends, thus forming four right angles or squares, in such a way that these lines suggest or imply a rotational movement around its centre, thereby generating a circumference. However, since that circumference (which, let us recall, symbolises universal manifestation) is not explicitly depicted in the swastika, the latter, rather than a symbol of the cosmos, appears as a symbol of the life-giving action exerted upon it by the Principle, regarded as the true ‘Unmoved Mover’. Indeed, the most important element in the swastika is the fixed point, symbol of the Centre, which remains unalterable and immutable, and yet is the one that transmits its energy to the Cosmic Wheel, generating it and giving life to all things, beings and worlds contained within it, which, after fulfilling the complete development of all their possibilities, return once more to it. As can be seen, these meanings have absolutely no connection with the political use that has been made of this symbol in modern times.

We might add that the four angles or corners of the swastika can also be observed in the four cardinal positions described by the constellation Ursa Major in its daily cycle around the North Star, which, due to the central position it occupies in the sky – since all celestial bodies revolve around it – has effectively been regarded as the symbolic abode of the Principle, also called the Great Unity in other traditions. In our model of *the Sephirotic Tree*, the North Star corresponds to *Kether*, as we already know (see Module I, [No. 18](#)), and it is certainly interesting to recall in this regard that in the *Zohar* the Big Dipper is called the Scales (it was also known by this name in ancient Chinese tradition), adding that it is ‘suspended in a place that does not exist’, which is to say in the unmanifest, where the balance and harmony of all manifestation truly reside. In the Hindu tradition, moreover, the swastika appears as one of the distinctive symbols of the *Brahmins*, and indeed in that same tradition it is stated that the seven stars comprising that constellation represent each of the sages (called *rishis*) who transmit Knowledge from one cycle of humanity to the next.

8

TAROT

The Tarot, the origin of the playing card game, is an oracle, a sacred book written not in words but in seventy-eight colour-illustrated pages or plates, each with its own multiple and precise correspondences and profound meanings, which, when first studied and then ‘shuffled’ or arranged in different symbolic ways, will act magically within the apprentice, serving as a vehicle for awakening consciousness and organising the intellect; that is to say, as a symbolic support for metaphysical knowledge.

Each card is called an ‘arcane’ as it connects with a mystery, with a supernatural force, with an archetype revealed within it – as in any sacred symbol – thus enabling this higher energy to take a form capable of touching the human senses and allowing man, starting from that sensory foundation, to rise towards the knowledge of what lies beyond the material world, and even further

beyond the psychic world, that is, the archetypal and spiritual planes.

The seventy-eight cards of the Tarot are divided into three groups as follows: the first group consists of forty cards known as ‘the Minor Arcana’; the second comprises sixteen cards called ‘Court Cards’; and the third consists of twenty-two illustrations known as ‘the Major Arcana’. It is customary to study these last twenty-two first.

9

KABBALAH

Below we present the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet so that the reader may become familiar with them. The numerical value corresponding to each letter is also given. In ancient Hebrew, vowels were not marked or dotted, as is done today. Consequently, words written using only consonants could be read in various ways, or with the aid of different vowels, thereby increasing their evocative and semantic power across multiple interpretations and meanings. The letters also have connections with other symbols, many of them animals, and of varying nature and character, which are associated with the alphabet, the word and the metaphysics of language.

א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ
Alef	Beth	Gimel	Daleth	He	Vav	Zayin	Heth	Teth	Yod	Kaf
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	20
ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ת
Lamed	Mem	Nun	Samekh	Ayin	Fe	Tsade	Qof	Resh	Shin	Taw
30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	200	300	400

We recommend that you carefully copy the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In this way, we will not only memorise the names of the letters, the alphabetic symbols, and their numerical values, but we will also work with sacred symbols imbued with magical and theurgical ideas and energies.

It is clear that if we know the esoteric value of the letters, their numerical connotations, and the transpositions and permutations to which they may give rise in the context of words and sentences, the reading of any sacred text – in particular the Bible – in which the Hebrew alphabet is present, will take on a meaning other than the common, literal and exoteric one, and will acquire a richness and depth that is all the greater the broader the scope. And it is through these associations and correspondences between numbers and letters, and the relationships they give rise to, that surprising insights into the metaphysical root of human language are produced, which the Kabbalah calls ‘divine sparks’.

The *Sefer Yetzirah* or ‘Book of Formations’ is also known as the

known as the 'Book of Creation', for it contains the most ancient Jewish cosmogonic concepts, which have served for generations to underpin the metaphysical and esoteric thought of Hebrew and Christian mysticism (particularly during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance) and of Kabbalah in particular. It specifically outlines, in the form of a brief and concise summary, certain Kabbalistic concepts that we have already been presenting throughout this Introduction, including the 'doctrine' of the ten *sefiroth*, as intermediaries between the 'Holy One, blessed be He', and the *Shekhinah* (the immanent divine presence, which we shall discuss shortly), and also that of Universal Creation through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which amounts to regarding the entire cosmos as divine scripture. These letters are subdivided into three groups: the three mothers, likened, as we have already seen, to air, water and fire; the seven doubles or doubled letters; and the twelve simple letters, subsequently identified with the seven planets and the twelve zodiacal signs, respectively.

Three mother letters: *Aleph, Mem* and *Shin*.

Seven double (or doubled) letters: *Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaf, Peh, Resh* and *Taw*.

Twelve simple letters: *Heh, Vav, Zayin, Heth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samekh, Ayin, Tsade* and *Qof*.

A new idea is that of the union of the ten *sefiroth*, figures, or numbers, with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which together constitute the thirty-two paths of wisdom.



Vegetation, in the boundless variety of its species, forms, colours and fragrances, constitutes an inexhaustible world of symbolic meanings known to all peoples since the most remote antiquity.

In this regard, let us recall that the Earthly Paradise is described as a garden or orchard, the care of which was entrusted to the first humans.

Furthermore, agriculture (the 'agricultural culture') is regarded as the first occupation to emerge from humanity's shift to a settled way of life, giving rise to the village and subsequently to the stone-built city and civilisation as we know it. Let us not forget that the word 'culture' derives precisely from 'cultivation', which is clearly related to the plant world. This undoubtedly explains why archaic and traditional man incorporated plants into the symbolic description of his cosmogony and his sacred vision of the world. Indeed, nothing better expresses the unfolding of universal life than a plant in full bloom, such as the tree, which is also one of the most widespread natural symbols of the World Axis, and the one that most clearly alludes to the cosmic structure and its different planes or degrees of manifestation. One need only recall the *Sephirotic* Tree of Life, similar, in terms of its essential significance, to many other sacred trees belonging to the most diverse traditions of all times and places, such as the ceiba among the Maya, the oak (or holm oak) among the Celts, the olive tree among the Mediterranean peoples, the *Yggdrasil* tree among the Scandinavians, the palm tree among the ancient Egyptians and Arabs, etc.

Certain flowers perform the same symbolic function, such as the lotus in Eastern traditions and the rose or lily in Western ones. All of these are symbols of the Centre and the World, and the opening of their petals expresses the unfolding of manifestation from the primordial Unity; hence they are also associated with the symbolism of the 'cosmic wheel', the number of petals corresponding to the spokes or rays connecting the centre of the wheel to its periphery. Nor should we forget that flowers in general are linked to the symbolism of the cup, and consequently to the passive and receptive aspect of manifestation, to the virginal purity of the 'quintessence', for example when one speaks of the 'calyx' of a flower.

Likewise, of the three kingdoms of nature, the plant kingdom is perhaps the one most directly linked to the flow of the rhythms and cycles of the cosmos, reflected in the periodic and annual renewal of plants, in the regeneration of the fertile and fruitful potency of their sap, thus providing the necessary nourishment and sustenance for humans and animals. But what is truly important is that this relationship lies at the very foundation of many agricultural myths and rites, whose symbolic structure reproduces the universal laws of correspondence and analogy (that is, of harmony) between the earthly and celestial orders, or between the visible and invisible orders; in short, the plant world—or rather, nature as a whole—is nothing other than a living and ever-present symbol of the supernatural and transcendent. For this very reason, the germination, development, flowering and offering of

fruits of plants remains an astonishing, truly magical and mysterious phenomenon for those who live immersed in the sacred, as was the case with the inhabitants of traditional societies, who saw in it the combined action of telluric and cosmic forces personified in the lunar and solar, terrestrial (and subterranean) on the one hand and celestial on the other, with the plant receiving the influence of the passive and active, feminine and masculine energies of the cosmos through the substantial nutrients of the earth and water, the life-giving power of the air, and the heat and light emanating from the solar fire. Hence derives the dual nature of the plant, 'asuric' due to its subterranean aspect and 'devic' due to its aerial and vertical (axial) aspect, these terms belonging to the Hindu tradition and designating, respectively, the telluric and celestial energies reconciled in the very act of the plant's creation. This takes on particular significance in so-called 'sacred plants', used in rites of initiation into the mysteries, and whose ingestion (drunk or eaten) places the being in communication with its lower and higher states, undertaking the 'journey' through the various planes of manifestation, descending and ascending along the Axis of the World.

These plants would thus serve as a medium or vehicle for Knowledge, and in many cases the plant itself, or its fruit, is regarded as the goal to be attained in order to gain access to that Knowledge; hence the terms 'elixir of immortality' or 'fruit of immortality' applied to certain plant substances, such as wine or ambrosia in Greco-Roman, Hebrew, Christian and Islamic cultures, -Roman, Hebrew, Christian and Islamic cultures, similar to the Hindu *soma* or *amrita*, which in turn is identical to the *haoma* of the ancient Iranians, said to be found only on the 'sacred mountain' *Alborj*, equivalent to the Axis of the World. Similarly, in plant alchemy there is mention of the "elixir of long life", which corresponds to the "philosopher's stone" in mineral alchemy, the elixir being the very essence of the plant, just as wine is the essence of the vine, another symbol of the Axis of the World. In this sense, we should recall that wine symbolises precisely the esoteric and metaphysical doctrine, that is, Knowledge, and this is surely what is alluded to by the expression 'the spirit of wine', or *aqua vitae* (water of life), or 'spirits', which is still preserved in the vernacular of various places, although its deeper meaning has largely been lost in most cases.

We must also mention wheat (equivalent to maize in pre-Columbian traditions, or to rice in Far Eastern traditions), and consequently bread, which together with wine constitute the two Eucharistic species of Christianity, that is to say, the body and the blood, or the substance and the essence united in the Word or Universal Man, the archetype of the initiate, who is precisely compared to a plant, as indicated by the word 'neophyte', which means both 'newborn' and 'new plant'. He is, likewise, compared to a seed or germ that must 'die' within the earth to be reborn into the world above and of light, which is his true origin, for unlike the plant, man has his 'roots' in Heaven, just as Plato tells us in the *Timaeus* when he says that 'man is a celestial plant, which means that he is like an inverted tree, whose roots tend towards the sky, and whose branches downwards, towards the earth'.

The science of alchemy is expressed primarily through graphic images and engravings. The symbol, sometimes partially concealed within the iconography, is thus revealed freely and without commentary. The saying goes that “a word to the wise is enough”. Continuing with the didactic approach of this Introduction to Sacred Science, where great attention is paid to visual teaching—which also helps one to learn to See—we offer here some engravings by the Adepts of the Art of Transmutation. These are, in this case, signs of the four elements (see Module I, [No. 20](#)), to which are added other ornamental details directly related to the Science of the Philosophers, or Royal Art.



[fig. 8](#)

Animals, as well as expressing the instinctive and irrational side of the human soul (the impulses, desires and emotions of the anima), have always occupied a pre-eminent place in the cosmogony of all traditional peoples and cultures, which have unanimously seen in them manifestations of cosmic and divine forces at work in the world, constituting themselves as vehicles and oracles transmitting the reality of the numinous, and therefore as messengers or intermediaries between the Spirit and man. They thus constitute a symbolic code of the utmost importance, a language through which man has been able and is able to decipher the keys that allow him to understand the laws and mysteries of the universe, and consequently to know himself, for, being a microcosm made in the image and likeness of the macrocosm, he contains within himself all forms, which is possible due to the central position he occupies in his world, and which was assigned to him by the Creator. In this sense, traditional texts state that the first humans had the power to name all beings and things, which would not be the case if these did not already form part of their integral nature. Likewise, the Adamic and primordial language has been called the ‘language of the birds’, for they are, in effect, nothing other than the messengers of higher realities, which bears relation to the ‘language of oc’ (from oca), regarded in the Middle Ages and in the south of France as the symbolic argot used by alchemists, builders, troubadours and minstrels to transmit Knowledge. The ‘language of oc’, or the ‘language of birds’, is truly the language of symbols.

We might say that animals (especially wild ones), in a certain sense, still retain the virginal purity of the origins: they are what they are, and in the spontaneity of their gestures they participate, alongside the whole of nature, in the harmony and the perennial rite of creation. Let us recall that in various cultures of what are today called ‘primitive’ or shamanic societies, the figure of the ‘initiating animal’ is of great importance, linked to the idea of an animal ‘alter ego’ within man; furthermore, in such cultures the mythical and civilising ancestor is generally an animal, and it is their dance, or ritual, of creation that is repeated and imitated in ceremonies of access to the sacred. It is also well known that certain ‘psychopomp’ animals (such as the dog and the horse) guide the deceased on their *post-mortem* journey, considered analogous to that which must be undertaken during the trials of the initiatory labyrinth; not forgetting that the ‘guardians of the threshold’, whose function is to prevent, or to permit those qualified to do so, entry into the invisible world, appear clothed in animal forms, sometimes with a monstrous and ‘terrible’ appearance. Such is the case, for example, with the Hindu *Makara* and *Kala-Mukha*, or the Chinese *Tao-Tie*, which represent the Supreme Being in his monstrous animal aspect, whose open jaws may indeed be both the “jaws of Death” and the “gate of Liberation”. The Sphinx, and specifically the Egyptian Sphinx with the head of a man and the body of a lion, would also have the same meaning of ‘guardian of the threshold’.

14

ANIMAL SYMBOLISM II

It is also important to note that almost all zodiacal deities, regardless of tradition, are represented in animal forms; and we should recall once again that the word ‘Zodiac’ simply means ‘wheel of animals’ or ‘wheel of life’, which is obviously linked to the idea of movement and generation arising from the universal Being—or rather, from its creative energy—which constantly recreates itself, in this case through indefinite animal forms. This fits perfectly with the idea, widespread among pre-Columbian civilisations, that the cosmos—that is, universal Life—is a gigantic animal, of which we are all an integral part (such is also the case with the alchemical serpent Ouroboros), and this would explain why, in those cultures, the creator deity is quite often represented as an animal, or characterised by its most significant parts, generally the head, as is the case, for example, with the Assyro-Babylonian and ancient Egyptian gods, or the elephant-headed god *Ganesha* in the Hindu tradition. In Mesoamerican traditions, the god *Quetzalcoatl* means ‘bird-serpent’ or ‘feathered serpent’, combining in his nature the aerial energies that tend towards the sky (the vertical) and those that crawl and move across the earth (the horizontal). The eagle and the serpent are, in fact, the two animals that best represent this antagonism and complementarity between the celestial, Uranian realm and the terrestrial, chthonic and telluric realm.

On the other hand, along with the lamb, the pelican and the fish, the eagle and the serpent are the most representative animal symbols of Christ, although this should be extended to almost all of them (including the mythical ones), as demonstrated by the rich bestiary (which includes the Tetramorph), so extensively developed in the art of the Middle Ages.

This bestiary encompasses practically all species divided into four major groups, corresponding to the four elements: reptiles to earth, fish and amphibians to water, birds to air, and mammals to fire, with Christ himself (the Son of Man) being the central element, or 'quintessence', for from him they emanate as expressions of the attributes of his creative Word or Logos.

15 NOTE:

We have already noted that culture (whose root and origin is sacred) acts as an intermediary between man and the deity. And it is from this perspective—and not from scholarly vanity, pigeonholing encyclopaedic knowledge, or mnemonic literalism—that it is illuminating and a particularly suitable vehicle for Knowledge. Without the essence of Culture, which is authentic knowledge, the rest of the ornate cultural apparatus is merely a dead letter. This is equally true of rites, which are sometimes confused with certain 'ceremonies' that are entirely devoid of content. This also applies to the studies and meditations promoted by this manual.

16

THE CROWN

At first glance, the crown symbolises the highest virtues that exist in man; hence it is placed upon the head, the 'summit' of the human microcosm, that is, the part of it that corresponds to Heaven, whose circular form the crown reproduces. But, precisely for this reason, the crown also expresses that which lies 'above' or 'beyond' the cosmos and humankind: the reality of the divine and the transcendent. It could be said, then, that the meaning of the crown encompasses both the noblest and highest qualities of the human being and, at the same time, that which transcends them by constituting their archetype. On the Path of Knowledge, or the initiatory path, these qualities develop through a long process of alchemical transmutation, during which the aspirant gradually becomes aware of the sacredness of their existence, or of their reality within the universal, until they fully identify with it.

This identification is often seen as the 'attainment' of a spiritual (or supra-individual) state, which is what effectively 'crowns' the completion of this process, that is to say, it 'legitimises' it (or makes it true and certain, which is what this word really means), endowing the one who fulfils it with an authority that emanates directly from the very power of God, the Supreme King, or King of the World. This is the meaning that the coronation rites of kings, the leaders of a people or a traditional community, held in ancient times; they were such because they had previously become kings and leaders of themselves, governing in accordance with the Will of Heaven, which they represented before their subjects. The true coronation (which is a 'consecration' or full assumption of the sacred) takes place in the innermost secret, in the heart, where the 'covenant' is established that seals the union with the Deity, the crown then being an external and distinctive sign confirming the possession of authentic inner kingship.

Furthermore, we cannot fail to mention the close links between the crown and the horns, which were also fastened upon the head, and symbolise exactly the same as the crown. The horns are an attribute of the power of the Spirit that ‘descends’ into the nature of man, whom it fertilises and transfigures by integrating him into the higher entity, which is his true Self. Likewise, the relationship between the horns and the ray—and, of course, with lightning—is evident; and we shall recall, in this regard, that the oldest crowns were adorned with points resembling rays of light. The same could be said of the crown of thorns worn by Christ the King during his Passion. All this serves to highlight the solar aspect of these symbols, which also appears in the laurel wreath (an eminently solar symbol) worn by Roman emperors and with which heroes were crowned, but without forgetting that this aspect is complemented by polar symbolism, which is the most fundamental.

Indeed, both words, ‘crown’ and ‘horns’, derive from the identical linguistic root, KRN, the same as *Kronos*, or Cronos, which is the Greek name for Saturn, the highest and most exalted of the planetary spheres and regarded as the king of the Golden Age. We also find it in *Karneios*, which was one of the names given by the Greeks to the Hyperborean Apollo (*Apollo Karneios*), the god of the ‘high place’ (*Karn*), that place being the very summit of the sacred Mountain of the Pole (the Axis of the World), seat of Tradition and primordial humanity. It also appears in the word ‘skull’, which is, in fact, the highest part of the spinal column – or axis – whose uppermost end is precisely called the ‘crown’. Since the skull is a symbol of the celestial vault, the crown would then correspond to the North Star, called the ‘apex’ of Heaven because it ‘crowns’ our entire visible universe, and is furthermore regarded in all traditions as the place through which one symbolically gains access to the higher states of being, which are essentially supra-cosmic and metaphysical. Let us recall, in this regard, that *Kether*, the Unity, signifies precisely the ‘Crown’, encircled by the *Adam Kadmon* or ‘Universal Man’.

This concept of the supra-cosmic is also represented by the *Sahasrara chakra* in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. All this polar and axial symbolism fits perfectly with that of the papal tiara (of very ancient origin), which is a crown consisting of three superimposed tiers, the top of which is crowned by a cross—another symbol of the Axis of the World (see, for example, Arcanum V of the Tarot). If the crown proper is the symbol of the temporal authority exercised by the king (the warrior), the tiara symbolises the spiritual authority assumed by the supreme pontiff or priest, who in traditional antiquity occupied the apex of the initiatory hierarchy, exercising his function over the three worlds, that is to say over the whole of manifested Existence, just as the God Hermes Trismegistus. He was, and is, the bridge or axis that connects Earth with Heaven, and Heaven with Earth; he is the one who transmits blessings or spiritual influences, and who possesses the full extent of the Doctrine and the traditional Teaching. This would explain why, during the Western Middle Ages, kings were crowned by spiritual authority, thereby acknowledging the superiority of the metaphysical over the temporal, of the divine over the human.

On the path to personal fulfilment proposed by this manual, the statement in the heading urges us to pay special attention to everything that goes unnoticed, yet which is of enormous importance when it comes to understanding the cause and origin of things. Numerous traditional sayings emphasise the superiority of the power of the small, subtle and invisible over the visible, coarse and large. “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field (within himself); it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it has grown it is larger than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air (symbol of the higher states) come and nest in its branches” (Matthew XIII, 31–32).

Likewise, all our actions, what we are and will be, were already contained, in potential, in the seminal cell that begot us and gave us life. These proportions between the small and the great are not merely quantitative, but qualitative, and obey the laws of analogy, which enable us to understand the idea of the Whole through one of its parts. But here we are speaking rather of the hierarchical relationships between the Principle and its manifestation, which appear inverted as we move from the celestial or spiritual order to the terrestrial or corporeal, always bearing in mind that the former is the cause of the latter. The greatest thing in Heaven is the smallest on Earth, and the greatest thing on Earth is the smallest in Heaven.

The cosmos is the unfolding of the ‘Egg of the World’, which harbours the seeds of all that exists and manifests itself cyclically. Likewise, when the Spirit wishes to make itself known, it does not do so through pomp and ceremony, nor through anything that comes from without, but rather through inner silence and the unnameable, as a force that springs from the deepest depths and expands throughout our entire being, illuminating it from within and ordering it according to its eternal archetype. That which is truly universal, the supreme, has no dimensions, nor is it subject to any earthly or human law. It dwells hidden and secret within the heart of beings, who without it would lack all reality, just as the circumference would not exist without the point, nor the numerical series without the arithmetic Unity. Thus, the more we identify with the things of ‘this world’, the less we will participate in the saving communion within the Being. ‘Make your “I” smaller and limit your desires.’ ‘Renounce knowledge (quantitative and profane) and you will not suffer’ (*Tao Te Ching*, XIX). “The last shall be first, and the first shall be last” (Matthew XX, 16). “The least among you all, that one shall be the greatest” (Luke IX, 48). “If anyone wishes to be first, let him be the last of all and the servant of all” (Mark IX, 35).

It is important not to forget, when studying the cards and working with them, what we have said about the disciplines related to the Tarot. These cards are related to the *sefirot* of the Tree of Life and the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, as well as to the planets, metals and zodiacal signs, etc.

Let us also constantly bear in mind their links with the symbolism of colours and especially with the meaning of numbers. If we manage to

If we establish these connections properly, we will see that each Arcana is a world unto itself, and we will find that our understanding is awakened and our perspective broadens.

It is up to the individual to expand, using the information at their disposal, the meanings of the cards. Knowledge of each one can be deepened to unsuspected levels.

Allow them to speak to you in a magical way and you will see them act within you as vehicles of initiation and suitable transmitters of Living Knowledge and a Primordial Tradition, with which you may thus connect.

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It is practically impossible for the modern mindset to conceive of the idea of a Celestial City, in contrast to the fully sacralised mindset of ancient and traditional peoples, who not only believed in its existence but also saw in it the origin of their culture and civilisation, as is very well explained in the chronicles and sacred texts they have bequeathed to us, in which it is said that this city is the dwelling place of the gods and mythical ancestors, which also expresses the idea of a spiritual genealogy, hence the names 'Land of the Living', or 'Land of the Immortals' or 'Land of the Blessed', as the City of Heaven is also known. Let us recall, in this regard, that traditional cities have always been built according to the model of that mythical City, that is, as the projection in time and space of the world of Ideas and Archetypes, as is the case with Teotihuacan (the "City of the Gods") of the ancient Mexican Toltecs, or Jerusalem, known as the "City of Peace", which corresponds to the heavenly Jerusalem described by the prophet Ezekiel and later by John in the Book of Revelation. The Chinese *Ming-tang*, whose name means 'Temple of Light', likewise reproduces the archetypal structure of the Celestial City, known in Far Eastern tradition as the 'City of Willows', inhabited by the 'Immortals'.

In general, this structure is present in all spiritual centres intended to be a symbol of the manifestation of Heaven on Earth, and therefore of the union and intimate connection between the two, to such an extent that there is no difference whatsoever to separate them. It is also worth recalling that often an entire country or region was considered the very image of Heaven, as is the case with ancient China, known precisely as the 'Celestial Empire', or Pharaonic Egypt, which was likened to a heart—also a symbol of Heaven—as Plutarch tells us in his book *Isis and Osiris*: "The Egyptians represent Heaven, which cannot age because it is eternal, by a heart", and Hermes Trismegistus affirms the same in the *Corpus Hermeticum*: "Do you not know, O Asclepius, that Egypt is the image of Heaven and the projection in this world of the entire order of celestial things? In truth, our earth is the temple of the whole world."

It is also important to note that the founding of cities, with their temples and sanctuaries, was a symbol expressing the establishment or consolidation of a traditional doctrine, thus making the earthly city the very expression of the cosmogonic and metaphysical principles revealed by that doctrine, for this has always been regarded as the direct emanation of the Doctrine of Heaven, which is none other than the Perennial Wisdom itself, the Eternal Law, or *Sanātana Dharma*, contained within the Primordial Tradition, or, in other words, within the Supreme Centre. Although this Centre was originally accessible to all men, it has, for cyclical reasons, become hidden and inaccessible to the vast majority; hence it is through an understanding of the profound meaning and

The essence of the Teaching lies in how one can truly establish communication with that Centre; that is, when the 'intention' and the will of one's entire being are directed towards Knowledge, and identifies with and becomes one with it, thereby promoting a true inner transformation commensurate with the realisation of all the possibilities contained within the human condition, in the light of whose fullness all things appear reintegrated into the Unity of the Self, which relates to the Gospel phrase: 'Seek and you shall find, ask and you shall be given, knock and it shall be opened unto you'. It is to this transformation (preceded by numerous deaths and births) that the Hermetic expression referring to the consummation of the Great Work alludes: 'to spiritualise the bodies and corporealise the spirits', or 'to spiritualise matter and materialise the spirit', as stated in the opening pages of this Programme.

The centre of the human condition is represented precisely by the heart, where, indeed, all traditions place the symbolic abode of the Celestial City, or Divine City (in Sanskrit *Brahma-pura*), which is the Kingdom of Heaven (identified with Christianopolis or the Temple of the Holy Spirit, 'which is everywhere', in Rosicrucian Hermeticism), of which it is said that it will not come ostensibly, 'Nor can it be said: Behold it there, behold it here, for the Kingdom of God is within you' (Luke XVII, 21). It is also the Celestial Jerusalem, as we have said, whose advent implies the abolition of the temporal condition, and therefore the restoration of the primordial state and the sense of eternity or the 'eternal present'. Consequently, it could then be asserted that the Celestial City is the permanent possibility of living reality in itself, without dualistic reflections, as it has been, is, and always will be, constituting the vertical point of reference that gives meaning and fulfilment to the entirety of our existence, which is recognised in the universal, leading us from the periphery to the centre through the Axis that connects the Earth with the Celestial Homeland, which is our origin and final destination: "Behold, the Tabernacle of God is among men, and He will pitch His Tabernacle among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them" (Revelation XXI, 3-4).

21

THE COMPASS AND THE SET SQUARE

When discussing Architecture (Module I, [No. 63](#)), we highlighted the importance of the form of the physical cosmos as a model that inspired ancient builders in the construction of sacred precincts and human dwellings. And amongst the principal instruments used for this purpose, we emphasise the compass and the square. Both are the respective symbols of Heaven and Earth, and are thus regarded in various traditions, or more precisely, initiations, such as Hermeticism, Freemasonry and Taoism. The circle drawn by the compass, or its substitute the string, symbolises Heaven because Heaven does indeed have a circular or domed shape, regardless of the earthly location from which it is observed. In turn, the square (or rectangle) traced by the set square symbolises Earth, a squareness derived, amongst other things, from the 'fixation' in terrestrial space of the four cardinal points marked by the sun in its daily path. Furthermore, the Earth has always been regarded as the symbol of stability, and the geometric figure that best corresponds to it is precisely the square, or the cube in three dimensions.

In Sacred Science, the compass signifies the Spirit's first act of ordering within the chaotic and formless Matter of the World, thereby establishing its archetypal boundaries; that is to say, creating an 'empty' space, ready to be fertilised by the Illuminating Word or *Fiat Lux*. In the biblical Genesis, the separation of the 'Upper Waters' (the Heavens) from the 'Lower Waters' (the Earth) gave birth to the cosmos, whose first manifestation was the creation of Paradise, which, as is well known, was circular in shape. In this regard, the Hindu texts state: "With his ray (radius) he has measured the limits of Heaven and Earth", and in the Proverbs of Solomon, through the voice of Wisdom, it is said: "when (the Lord) drew a circle upon the face of the abyss...". Similarly, in a painting by the English painter and poet William Blake, the 'Ancient of Days' (the Architect of the World) is seen with a compass in his hand, drawing a circle.



[fig.9](#)

The compass is thus an instrument used to determine the most perfect figure of all, a tangible image of Celestial Reality, which is precisely what the dome or vault of the Temple symbolises. The compass is the emblem of divine Intelligence, of the "Eye of God" which symbolically resides within the heart of man, the light of the higher intellect that dispels the darkness of ignorance and allows us to enter into the sacred. For this very reason, knowledge of the "science of the compass" implies a penetration into the most secret and profound mysteries of the Self. However, a fully effective understanding of these mysteries would be, so to speak, the culmination of the very process of Initiation.

But when it comes to "getting down to work", you don't start building a house from the roof. The work begins at the bottom, ultimately with the foundations, with knowledge of earthly and human matters. This is where the 'science of the square' comes into play, so necessary for drawing up, with order and judgement, the ground plans of the building and its subsequent construction, giving it stability and ensuring the perfect cutting of the stones that will serve as the support and foundation for the vault, roof or upper part.

In inner work, it is essential, for the process to proceed in a regular and orderly manner, to 'square' all our actions and thoughts within the path indicated by Tradition and the Teaching, separating the subtle from the

coarse. This is precisely what the *Tao-Te-King* points out: “Thanks to knowledge suitably framed, we walk steadily along the great Way”. We should recall, in this regard, that in Latin ‘square’ is also called ‘norma’, which is likewise one of the translations of the Sanskrit word *dharma*, the Universal Law or Norm by which all beings and the whole of cosmic manifestation are governed. We could therefore say that the square is the terrestrial compass, since it is nothing other than the application on earth and to humanity of the principles and ideas symbolised by the compass.

On the other hand, this union of the celestial circle and the terrestrial square (or cross) relates to the hermetic enigma of the ‘squaring of the circle’ and the ‘circling of the square’, which encapsulates the complete mysteries of cosmogony. Indeed, the ‘science of the compass’ and the ‘science of the square’ contain the entirety of the ‘lesser mysteries’, whose path is first horizontal (terrestrial) and subsequently vertical (celestial). By all this we wish to indicate that there is in fact a philosophical application of Geometry, which we might call ‘Philosophical Geometry’, which was perfectly known to medieval builders, journeymen and operative masons, as well as to all those who devoted themselves to Architecture or the order of the cosmos as a means of rising to the knowledge of what the primordial point symbolises. It was not for nothing that Plato had the words inscribed on the frontispiece of his school: ‘Let no one enter here who is not a geometer’, thus indicating that his teachings could only be understood by those who knew the qualitative and esoteric aspect of geometry.

From another perspective, working with the compass and square likewise encapsulates the entire alchemical process of consciousness, of which edification and construction are but a symbol. Hence, in some Hermetic-alchemical emblems, the Rebis or primordial Androgyne is seen holding the compass and square in his hands, that is to say, uniting within human nature the virtues and qualities of Heaven and Earth, harmonising them into an indissoluble unity.



[fig.10](#)

We already know that Hebrew letters, like those of any sacred language, are symbolic, and we must regard them as such in our studies and meditations. Indeed, these letters have an ideographic form; that is to say, they express ideas and principles intimately related to numbers and geometric figures. At the same time, these letters are articulated sounds of a single Word, which, in their manifold combinations, generate the entirety of language—that is, of what can be expressed, for the inexpressible belongs to the purely metaphysical and unmanifested.

This is the case with the letter *Iod* (or *Yod*), which constitutes the first of the Tetragrammaton, YHVH, the ineffable Divine Name. This primacy is indicated by its very smallness, which evokes a point, or a seed, thus symbolising the indivisible, hidden and secret essence of divinity. This places it in direct relation to the geometric centre, and of course to arithmetic unity, which are also symbols of the unmanifested Principle. Furthermore, the numerical value of the *Yod* is ten, which expresses the totality of created aspects, symbolised by the ten *sefirot* and the ten fingers of the hands, a totality that is contained within unity itself, for $10 = 1 + 0 = 1$. On the other hand, it is said that the letter *Alef* (which is the first of the alphabet) is composed of four *Yods*, and is thus related to the number 40, which in turn reduces back to unity, since $40 = 4 + 0 = 4$, and $4 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10 = 1 + 0 =$

1. All this demonstrates the connections that exist between the decimal and the quaternary, the former symbolising the complete development of manifestation, whilst the latter expresses the link that unites that manifestation to its principle, and vice versa. This is precisely what the cross inscribed within the circle symbolises. This same figure also represents the four rivers of the Pardes (or Paradise), which flow from the centre of the Tree of Life, distributing unity to all the ends of creation.

Furthermore, there is no doubt as to the importance of the number 40 in Kabbalah, as it represents the ten *sefirot* across the four planes of the Tree. Moreover, this number is linked to the forty years Moses spent in the desert before the people of Israel entered the Promised Land. This number also signifies a timeless symbolic cycle, for whilst all planes of existence are interconnected, they also have a chronological expression. Finally, it should be noted that for the ancient Kabbalists, man began to comprehend the mysteries from the age of forty, an age signifying the maturity necessary to grasp the deepest and most secret truths.

23 NOTE:

Despite the process of desacralisation in the modern world, the power of myth remains present. As already indicated, proof of this lies in the various folklore, legends and tales that endure in the popular imagination, and which retain the imprint of sacred and initiatory myths and symbols, although it is true that these often appear degraded and laced with heavy doses of superstition. However, it is also true that were it not for this survival, it would be practically impossible for us to have any knowledge of many of these myths and symbols, as they would have been lost

forever. In astrological symbolism, this memory is linked to the sphere of the Moon – and to the sefirah Yesod – which, within the subtle structure of the cosmos, fulfils a conservative and receptive function where the subtle ‘germs’ of the individual being are ‘deposited’, in a latent and potential state. Once the higher possibilities contained within these seeds have been awakened, they will undergo a gradual and orderly development, the fulfilment of which will coincide with the birth of a new and completely regenerated man, which is equivalent to spiritual rebirth.

The fact that humanity cannot do without myths is evident today in the vast array of comics, novels and films, where stories of vigilante heroes fighting thieves and murderers perpetuate the struggle between the forces of light and those of darkness. The same can be said of the myth of love (the union of seemingly antagonistic yet complementary principles, symbolised by man and woman), which is perhaps the one that has been most powerfully perpetuated and which nourishes the majority of modern popular films and songs. And this is a clear indication that the energy of the goddess of Love and Beauty, Venus, has not been extinguished, but remains fully alive and full of vitality in the souls of men, as it could not fail to be, since it is an immortal energy.

24

MYTHOLOGY

The various meanings of myths – just like those of symbols – do not contradict one another, even if they overlap; or to put it another way: these meanings are multifaceted and refer both to different planes of reality and to different aspects of its manifestation. The fact is that one interpretation or approach to a myth (or a symbol) does not necessarily exclude any other; rather, these meanings complement one another, as they often refer to aspects of reality that coexist intrinsically within it.

Modern man is accustomed to proceeding in an absolutely binary manner, that is, in terms of yes or no (generally in terms of the ‘good’ – always distinct and changing – which leads to the denial of the ‘evil’ implicit in any manifestation), a characteristic of his formal-logical education, which in the 17th and 18th centuries necessarily led to rationalism. It is the product of his historical conditioning, and within these parameters he believes himself perfectly capable of judging and evaluating everything, without realising that he is a victim of his conditioning; under the guise of this illusory science, he presumes to interpret cultures and ways of thinking that were not only not conceived from such simplistic and naive perspectives, but quite the contrary, those very thinkers and cultures took it upon themselves to warn of the risks of such attitudes from the very outset of their formulation, since the errors of modern society are already expressed in embryonic form in the seeds of classical Greece, or to put it another way, in the foundations of every living organism (such as a civilisation), which, by virtue of its multifaceted growth, finds itself increasingly distant from its original state, carrying within it the destructive elements that will precipitate its degradation and ultimate demise. Therefore, the erroneous simplification of positive or negative (good or bad), always excluding one in favour of the other, is nothing but a mistake, since the

classifications in question are valid only from one point of view – ignoring the opposite – and are subject to the relativity of time (what is bad today was good yesterday; what might be considered good today was bad in times past, and so on).

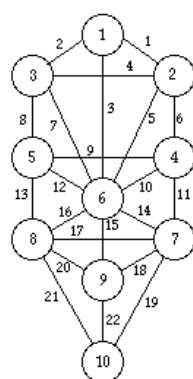
Myth, in its ambivalence, sheds light on this ignorance of which most of our contemporaries—who strive to be ‘good’, or, in an even more degenerate manner, ‘bad’—take such pride, without realising that, in the grand scheme of the cosmos, these arbitrary judgements are subject to the individual dictates of their own egos, whose self-serving convenience—be it social or personal—is the product of their desires, which toss them about in every direction.

It is this kind of attitude, namely: ignorance of the laws of cosmogony – to which myths refer in the first place – that leads them to despise myth, to treat it as fables or fantasies, or to attempt its mnemonic and erudite classification, or at best to interpret it with a shallowness and mediocrity worthy of the thinking of the society in which they live.

25

KABBALAH A

The Kabbalah can be grouped into two main divisions. The first is the Kabbalah of *Bereshit* – originating from the letter *Beth*, with which creation begins – and the other is the Kabbalah of *Merkabah*, or the Kabbalah of the Chariot, related to the Tri-Unity of the supreme *sefiroth*. The first refers to Cosmogony, and we can link it to the geometric figures of the square and the circle, representing earth and heaven respectively, and also to horizontality and verticality. Incidentally, it is with the Kabbalah of *Bereshit* that you connect through this Introduction. There are Kabbalists who directly link the twenty-two Major Arcana of the Tarot with the twenty-two letters of the sacred alphabet, matching card I, The Magician, with the letter *Alef*, and so on in succession. Not all Hermeticists proceed in exactly the same way when it comes to these correspondences, and this can lead to different *Sephirotic* diagrams in which the paths are marked by different Tarot cards. Below we provide one version, so that the reader may continue to weave relationships and correspondences.



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When discussing the symbolism of the letter *Yod*, we noted that it was the first of the four letters that make up the Tetragrammaton, or the Great Name of God, YHVH, which, as we recall, is unpronounceable, for it expresses a great mystery. We would now like to propose a topic for meditation concerning the correspondence of these letters with the ten *sefiroth*, which will undoubtedly broaden our understanding of the model of the Kabbalistic Tree. According to the *Zohar*, the *Yod* expresses the indivisible and ontological union of the first two *sefiroth*, *Kether* (the Crown) and *Hokhmah* (Wisdom). The tip or upper vertex of the *Yod* represents *Kether*, the 'supreme root', which is immersed in and emanates from *En Sof*, the unlimited and supra-essential Nothingness, identical to Non-Being and the *Deus Absconditus*, from which it draws all its reality, for we must remember that *Kether* is nothing but a point affirmed within that infinity. From that vertex, from *Kether*, emanates *Hokhmah*, also called the 'Father', symbolised by the remainder of the *Yod*, which extends slightly downwards, representing Being itself giving rise to manifestation.

But for this to be so, it is necessary that *Binah* (Intelligence), also called the 'Supreme Mother', or the passive principle of *Kether*, be fertilised by *Hokhmah*, the active principle, and it is this fertilisation that is expressed by the second letter of the Tetragrammaton, the *Heh*. The union of this with the *Yod* (*Hokhmah*) generates the third letter, the *Vav*, which is called the 'Son'. The shape of this letter, with its lower arm extending downwards, perfectly suggests the idea of the descent of the higher principles into the very heart of manifestation itself, for that letter represents the synthesis of the six *sefiroth* of cosmic construction, *Hesed*, *Gueburah*, *Tifereth*, *Netsah*, *Hod* and *Yesod*, which, as the *Zohar* says, 'transmit the inheritance to the Daughter'. This is none other than the second *Heh*, the final letter of the Tetragrammaton, which symbolises the *sefirah Malkhuth*, the 'Kingdom', the receptacle of all *sefirah*-based emanations, which it distributes throughout the created order. Kabbalah refers to these four letters as the 'divine family', clarifying that they all form a unity, like the Tree of Life itself, or the very reality of the Cosmos, which it certainly symbolises.



[fig.11](#)

The phrase: “God is Love”, taken from the Gospel of John, allows us to glimpse the exalted nature of this energy, regarded by all traditions as one of the principal names or attributes of Unity (of *Kether*), identifying with it, as attested by the fact that in Hebrew the word Unity (*Ehad*) and Love (*Ahabah*) have the same numerical value, 13. In this sense, Master Eckhart already affirmed: “Wherever the soul is, there God works His work. This work is so great that it is nothing other than Love, but Love is nothing other than God. God loves Himself; He loves His Nature, His Essence and His Divinity. But in the Love with which God loves Himself, He also loves all creatures, not insofar as they are creatures, but insofar as they are God. In the love with which God loves Himself, He loves the whole world.”

For this reason, love is said to be the force of attraction between opposites, the centre of union where the vertical and horizontal, active and passive energies of the cosmos and of humankind are reconciled, making possible universal balance and true harmony (or the ‘union of hearts’), hence the ancient Greeks saw in it the son of Aphrodite and Hermes (just like his sister, the goddess Harmonia), from whom the Hermaphrodite is also born, that is, the Rebis, which represents in the human being the perfect and harmonious union of their masculine and feminine, active and passive, *yang* and *yin* natures. Indeed, it is through the fire of love, and the subtle passion it generates, that the work of alchemical transmutation is carried out, for that fire is love itself for Knowledge and Wisdom, and as Leonardo da Vinci said: “Love is the son of Knowledge. Love is all the more exalted the truer the Knowledge.” It is this love, an expression of divine love, that the medieval troubadours sang of, and which Dante sees personified in the figure of Beatrice (who symbolises Wisdom), and it is certainly the love that Solomon invokes in *the Song of Songs*, where the text deals precisely with the ‘wedding’, ‘marriage’, or union of the human soul with the Spirit.

Likewise, the humanists and hermetic masters of the Renaissance, who drew upon the teachings of Plato and Orphic and Greco-Roman mythology, spoke of the mysteries of Love, identifying them with the mysteries of Death, which are, after all, the mysteries of initiation, and explained that to die was to be loved by a god, and vice versa, that to love was to die or to be killed by a god. In reality, it is a sacrifice (a ‘sacred act’), for there is no birth into the reality of the Spirit—that is, into Knowledge—without this entailing a death or the overcoming of the limitations inherent to the human condition. Lovers of Wisdom know that they cannot wed it unless they abandon or cease to feel conditioned by Venus Pandemos, that is, by their earthly desires and loves, which they regard as an inverted reflection of the heavenly loves bestowed by Venus Urania. Pico della Mirandola gave the example of the sacrificial ‘flaying’ of Marsyas as the model to be followed by such lovers: “If you associate with singers and harpists, you may trust your ears, but when you approach philosophers, you must turn away from the senses, you must turn inwards, you must penetrate the depths of your soul and the recesses of your mind, you must acquire the ears of Tineo (referring to Apollonius of Tyana, the Pythagorean philosopher),

with which, no longer being in his body, he did not hear the earthly Marsyas but the heavenly Apollo, who with his divine lyre and ineffable ways, intoned the melodies of the spheres".

28

METAPHYSICS

The study of the texts in our Programme – and all the symbols it employs – tends to lead us towards the knowledge and realisation of the higher possibilities of being, which we have defined as being of a metaphysical nature. And it is appropriate here to make some observations regarding what we understand by metaphysics, although we must caution against the difficulties of expressing anything concerning a realm that has always been considered inexpressible, and the impossibility of defining that which is essentially indefinable.

We have given the word ‘metaphysics’ the etymological connotation of ‘beyond physics’ and believe this to be the clearest, if we understand, as the ancients did, that physics is the science that studies the phenomena of nature, in the fullest sense of the term, and that what pertains to metaphysical knowledge is supernatural, and at the same time supra-human and supra-cosmic, for it goes beyond the sensible and transcends the world of manifestation.

To attain the metaphysical, we cannot rely on the methods of philosophy and the secular sciences, which are rational, discursive and indirect, and wholly inadequate; rather, we must turn to a direct and supra-rational knowledge, which can only be attained through the purest intuition. The symbols and words we use are magical supports on which we may well rely to elevate our thought to the subtlest spheres of being; but the metaphysical—the doctrine tells us—lies beyond all forms and contingencies, and even beyond Being, for it belongs to the realm of Non-Being.

Whilst the individual intellect, limited by the senses, the corporeal and the transitory, is confined within its own limits, the transcendent and universal intellect directly knows the immutable and eternal principles. Man can attain this realm of the metaphysical, but not as an individual and transitory being, but insofar as he participates in this higher intelligence and is linked to it through an awareness of his true spiritual possibilities, which are more than human. Our individual reality is merely a momentary manifestation of true being, one of its many states, and metaphysical knowledge transcends man himself, and even the cosmos, for it is absolutely boundless. It is obvious that we are not referring to ordinary, profane knowledge but to an experience of a different order that transcends anything that could be imagined. Whilst the particular states of being have a spatio-temporal manifestation, being itself, in its metaphysical principle, is eternal, and from eternity all those states are now, in simultaneity.

It is important to note that by this we are not denying the physical, nor the individual possibilities of being. We merely wish to emphasise that the metaphysical is of a higher order, and that the physical is contained within it.

Metaphysical truth is eternal and unique, and there have always been beings who know it, for they participate fully in that state of Liberation and Union.

29

SACRED GEOGRAPHY

For the Tradition, geography, like history, is regarded as a sacred science, in contrast to what contemporary science studies under this same name, which ignores that the Earth is a living being that breathes and feels, and that possesses, in addition to a body, a soul and a spirit. In this regard, we shall recall what Alchemy teaches us when it speaks of the generation and transmutation of metals and stones within the Earth, an interior which is regarded as the womb of the *Mater Genitrix*, the receptacle of the vertical and numinous energies expressed through cosmic rhythms and cycles. Hence, geography is complemented by cosmography, a branch related to the science of astrology, through which it is possible to know with precision the aspect of the Heavens at any given moment, as well as the revolutions of the planets and the stellar and zodiacal constellations. Often, place names themselves reveal the analogies and correspondences that exist between the terrestrial and celestial orders. Such is the case, for example, with the city of Santiago de Compostela, a name which literally means ‘field of stars’. The very route of the Camino de Santiago is regarded as a terrestrial projection of the Milky Way, thus signifying the celestial origin of that path. Similarly, the arrangement of certain topographical features – such as rivers, mountains, rocks, caves, valleys, and even countries and islands – describes, through their configuration and thanks to subtle harmonies, certain constellations and even the entire zodiac, such as that depicted in the landscape of Glastonbury, in the English county of Somerset.

On the other hand, the major cyclical changes in the universe have had a profound impact on the form that the Earth’s surface has taken in successive stages; it has not always had the same configuration. In a certain sense, the so-called geological eras correspond, in space, to what the cosmic eras are in time; that is to say, to the cyclical divisions (the most important of which is the precession of the equinoxes, or half thereof) that make up a complete era of the world and of humanity, which in the Hindu tradition is called a *Manvantara*. The shift or tilt of the Earth’s axis (which in primordial times was the same as that of the heavens) marked the transition from one cyclical period to another, this being the origin of major geological changes, as well as the emergence of the seasons. In accordance with these laws, entire continents have disappeared (as in the famous case of Atlantis, of which Plato speaks in the *Critias*), whilst others have emerged. Likewise, ancient cartographic maps did not, like modern ones, describe only the physical aspect of the Earth—which, from a traditional perspective, is secondary—but rather, above all, expressed a symbolic and mythical vision of geography, and consequently represented a source of traditional teaching.

In this sense, the study and knowledge of Geomancy (which the ancient Chinese knew by the name of *feng shui*, ‘water-air’, as these two natural agents were considered the principal modifiers of the landscape) provides us with the key to understanding the true

nature—both magical and metaphysical—of terrestrial space. There are places that are magical because, mysteriously, the invisible axis of the world manifests itself there, connecting the sensible to the supersensible, uniting telluric and cosmic powers into a harmonious whole. These places became sacred spaces or ‘holy lands’, where cities were founded and altars and temples were erected, oriented according to specific cardinal points, particularly the East and the North. We might add that the cardinal points are symbolic regions where divine entities and attributes reside, whose influences consecrate the entire earthly world.

30

ASTROLOGY AND THE DEITIES

In Sacred Science, the planets are the visible manifestations and symbols of numinous entities or gods, who, through their vital breath, animate them and set them in motion. Indeed, in Judeo-Christian and Islamic esotericism, angels are referred to as the true rulers of the planetary spheres. Let us remember that the planetary gods are cosmic cycles that encompass smaller ones, such as those of humankind, which they shape through their influences. Thus, what mythological tales, legends and theogonies express as struggles, oppositions, coincidences and loves between the various divine forces are nothing other than the alternation of one cycle with another; when these relate to the zodiacal rhythms, they have a marked effect on the horizontal plane of the earthly world, unfolding in the multiform spectacle of life. Likewise, and from the perspective of Sacred Science, these connections between the deities constitute a mystery (let us recall that the word ‘mystery’ shares the same root as the word ‘myth’), that is to say, they reveal an archetypal mode of being and a specific quality of the universal soul, and likewise of the human soul.

From the union or conjunction of the energies of Venus, goddess of love and transcendent femininity, and Mars, god of war and spiritual virility, a daughter is born who is called Harmony, for, as the ancient philosophers said, when opposites unite in the exact and proper proportion, a marvellous harmony arises from them that maintains the order of beings and things in a delicate balance. Or, as Plato puts it, Harmony seeks to bind and weave together those who are by nature opposites and adversaries. From the marriage of Zeus-Jupiter, god of the illuminating lightning and omnipotent father of the gods, with Maya, who personifies the plastic and generative substance of the cosmos, is born Hermes-Mercury, who, as we know, represents the numen that communicates the celestial to the terrestrial, the divine to the human, and vice versa. In turn, Hermes-Mercury, upon ‘copulating’ with Venus, procreates and generates the Hermaphrodite or alchemical Rebis, who, as his very name suggests, unites the Wisdom and theurgical Knowledge of Hermes with the Beauty and Love of the daughter of heaven, Aphrodite, the Uranian Venus. This is a union that fosters that love of Knowledge so necessary for spiritual realisation.

When Saturn-Cronus, the King of the Golden Age and Ancient Primordial, with the wise and profound maturity that characterises him, engages with the impetus and quick intelligence of the young Mercury, one of the combinations most praised by the Hermetic masters of the

Renaissance, which was summarised in a famous phrase: ‘Do the urgent slowly’, thereby alluding to the prudence that must govern all the acts and thoughts of the alchemist, of whom it has also been said that he is a *puer senex*, that is, an ‘old child’.

Ideas, having reached their peak of maturity, are released through the intervention of Mercury, the mystagogue and initiator, for it is through him that they are expressed to the outside world. The god Zeus has a direct influence over his daughters, the Muses (born of his union with Mnemosyne, Memory), frequently interacting with the other deities and with men through them. Each god has his own Muse, and each Muse inspires man with the knowledge of a sacred science and art. Apollo, god of fire and supernatural light, who leads his choir, presides over the fundamental rite of the sacrifice of the human soul, which is irresistibly carried away to its heavenly abode when it ‘hears’ the marvellous chords and harmonies he draws from his divine lyre, a gift from Hermes, thus freeing itself from the bonds that keep it tied to its earthly condition.



[fig.12](#)

31 LEARNING TO READ:

One of the most important things in our disciplines is to learn to read anew. This new reading of the texts, a symbol of a different appreciation of life and of things, involves a distinct attitude towards what is read. The readings on which the neophyte feeds—theurgical and initiatory texts—require a special approach for them to truly take effect. In practice, we can distinguish between a profane and superficial reading and a profound and sacred one. Studying a text is not merely learning it literally, or by ‘heart’. Nor is it skimming over it without understanding it. It is simply a matter of grasping its meaning.

a) We are accustomed to ‘consuming’ what we read. We must pay close attention to what we read. Metaphysical studies (which are sometimes a little complicated or tiring) must be clearly separated from the simple reading to which we are usually accustomed. This new way of reading that we suggest is also a ritual, a shift in perspective and the creation of a new world of symbols and concepts, with the consequent departure from the space and time of your previous situation. Take the time you need and revisit what you have read. Make an equal effort to create a mental archive of images.

b) Get into the habit of reading between the lines. Remember that every text has three, if not four, levels of interpretation.

Movement 1: Let yourself be completely carried away by the reading until you are immersed in the world it offers you. Movement of opening. Dissolution-expansion.

Movement 2: Reflect on what you have read. Extract – or try to extract – the ultimate meaning of what is being expressed. A movement of coagulation-concentration.

Movement 3: Establish connections.

32

BEAUTY

Like Love – with which it is inextricably linked – Beauty is a divine name or attribute, as demonstrated and exemplified by the *sefirah Tifereth*, also known as Harmony, as we know. Due to its universal nature, Beauty belongs to no one, and certainly defies the classifications of modern art and the modern artist, who perceive only its aesthetic and superficial aspects, when they do not simply deny it, opting instead for what is truly grotesque and confusing. Most of those who call themselves ‘artists’ forget that beauty is a constant wonder implicit in the ever-changing and multifaceted fabric of life, and, more importantly, in the very essence and being of things and beings. It is identified with the ungraspable, with that which cannot be measured or calculated, but can be experienced as a kind of intellectual and supra-rational emotion, capable of producing that necessary ‘break in the plane’ which makes possible direct contact with the spiritual realities that, moreover, all creation constantly reveals and suggests. That is why it has always been regarded as an intermediary energy between the human and the divine, between the horizontal and the vertical, just like the symbol, and like the symbol

is a vehicle that leads us to Knowledge.

A union of apparent opposites, or a fusion into a single entity of the knowing subject and the known object, Beauty is the reflection in the cosmos of Archetypal Unity, which, germinating in the heart of man, leads him to the knowledge of himself and the world through the rapture produced by their contact. In this sense, Beauty participates both in Dionysian ecstasy (related to the attraction and vertigo towards telluric and terrestrial energies) and in the Apollonian, where this ecstasy transforms into contemplation of pure forms. This is the case with Plato, for whom the figures of the circle and the square provided the contemplation of absolute Beauty.

The sacred and traditional arts bring together these two ways of conceiving Beauty, which, depending on the temperament of the men who create them, may express one form or the other, or both at once, for in reality they are complementary, just as Earth and Heaven are. To give an example: a Christian icon and the voluptuous forms of a pagan goddess may, at heart, suggest the same idea. Be that as it may, to intuit true Beauty, and to be one with it, can happen at any moment, regardless of the cause, for then we shall no longer be the same, with our false complexes and prejudices, but we shall have been granted the grace to participate in the rite of a total dance, from which nothing and no one is excluded.

33

SACRED GEOGRAPHY

Every Holy Land, or Sacred Land, specific to each tradition, is the symbol of the Archetypal Earth, which manifested visibly at the beginning of the current terrestrial and human cycle. This was the residence of the Supreme Centre or Great Primordial Tradition, which had to hide and become invisible (moving to another plane) when the conditions in which its existence was possible became difficult. Geographically, the Supreme Centre was situated approximately where the North Pole is today, which the Greeks called Hyperborea, and which in those early times had more benign climatic conditions than at present: a 'perpetual spring', as some traditions indicate. This was due, as has already been mentioned, to the fact that the Earth's axis was not tilted relative to the celestial axis, meaning there was no succession of seasons.

It is also worth noting – and in order to highlight the analogies that exist between the physical and spiritual realms – that the North Pole represents the region taken as a vertical reference point from any location on the Earth's surface (although this is the case today due to cultural globalisation and the representation of the Earth as a sphere); the North Pole is also the upper end of the vertical axis that passes through the Earth, and therefore the centre around which the Earth rotates, being the only place (along with the South Pole) that remains stable and does not rotate in said rotation. In this sense, it is perfectly normal that the polar region should have been the first to harbour the Primordial Tradition, for this is also the origin and the unchanging doctrinal centre of all others throughout the ages; its permanent axial point of reference. Its withdrawal and

concealment led to the emergence of the various traditional forms and the establishment of the respective sacred geographical centres, which were, and continue to be, reflections of the first (see ‘The Mountain and the Cave’, Module I No. 61). Such is the case with Jerusalem for Judeo-Christianity, Mecca for Islam, Delphi for classical Greece, Rome for the Italic traditions and indeed for modern Catholicism, Thebes for ancient Egypt, Babylon for the Mesopotamian cultures, the mythical Aztlán (Atlantis) for the Mesoamerican cultures, Cristianópolis or the ‘Solar Citadel’ for Rosicrucian Hermeticism, etc. The original name of the Supreme Centre was Tula, or Thule, the ‘Balance’, or also Syria, the ‘Land of the Sun’, an expression indicating a celestial and luminous transposition of geographical space. Tula designates the constellation of the Great Bear, which, with its seven stars – the number of perfection – resembles an ark revolving around the North Star, the symbolic abode of the Great Unity or Architect of the Universe. The North Star is the Summit, the Zenith of the Cosmic Mountain, Tree or Axis of the World, from which the four sacred rivers carrying the Water of Celestial Life flow out in all directions of space.

34 NOTE:

In various traditions, Paradise is represented by the heart, which is the centre of the human condition, equivalent, as we have said, to the ‘Heart of the World’, the inner ‘Holy Palace’, or Brahma-Pura (‘the City of Brahma’). Hence, one must understand the existence of an analogy between mythical or sacred geography and man’s own inner or spiritual space. Within that space there are also regions and lands that are nothing other than states of consciousness which the being comes to recognise at the different stages or levels of their spiritual evolution. “The Kingdom of God is within you,” says the Gospel; and Buddhist Lamaism: “Shambhala (the Supreme Land or Paradise) is in our heart.” In the light of these conceptions, geographical space is transformed into its celestial archetype, where the timeless is glimpsed. The beauty of the world, of Malkhuth, is the reflection of Beauty, of Tifereth. The ecstatic visions of certain mystics describe a geography situated on another plane of reality, where theophanies occur and angelic and divine entities are revealed. It is the “Land of the Blessed”, of the “Living”, of the “Immortal Ancestors”, to which, however, “one cannot reach by ship or chariot, but only by the flight of the spirit”. In this regard, the Hermetic masters tell us: “Paradise is still on this earth, but man is far from it until he is regenerated.” Agartha is the grotto hidden within the mountain, situated on the same axis as the summit, like the crypt in the temple.

35

VISION

The practice of Geometry and Meditation are methods of purifying the ‘eye of the soul’, which cultivate the capacity for Vision or the faculty of contemplating Truth: a faculty also called the Intelligence of the heart, the only one capable of uniting the manifested world with its Origin.

This form of perception differs greatly from the visual ability we commonly use and requires a deeper understanding of reality, in more ways than one. Sight and

hearing, although related in function, operate in very different ways: visual intelligence, for thinking, creates an image in our mind; it is indirect, analytical and sequential, whilst auditory intelligence is direct, without imagery, and evokes an immediate response. It is this that perceives patterns of relationship and configurations in space. It is also this faculty that is associated with the right hemisphere of the brain, whilst sight, being temporal in nature, is associated with the left, which measures and analyses rationally, to use a symbolic description. It is this 'right mode' or 'straight way' that allows one to penetrate the esoteric aspect of the symbol and comprehend its meaning, because it can perceive opposites simultaneously.

When the auditory and visual faculties are 'centred', 'colours are heard' or 'music is seen'. Through Geometry, the Pythagoreans combined and balanced the eternal opposites, and a heard vibration came to take on a visible form, just as a visual rhythm expressed itself in audible harmonies.

36

THE ANALOGY

In Module I, section [23](#), dedicated to analogy, we referred to the inversion of two orders symbolised by the Seal of Solomon. We shall merely add that the One mysteriously appears as the many, insofar as it is reflected in the prism of manifestation, and even more so when it does so in the modalities of the individual. Hence the well-known reservations of Tradition in this regard, in reiterating the illusory and relative nature of appearances, which, being reflected and inverted images of reality, are unfortunately taken for reality itself. We confuse the symbol with that which is symbolised. The very Hermetic proposition: 'as above, so below', demands a correct interpretation of the correspondences, since that which is 'above' is symbolically expressed by that which is below, but in reverse. 'The last shall be first, and the first shall be last'. Sin, error and their common denominator, ignorance, are nothing but the idolatry of the unreal and illusory. A pure absurdity that ceases to be so as the being becomes effectively aware of what is truly real and eternal.

The vehicle par excellence of thought is the symbol, and the essence of the symbol is analogy. Indeed, analogy is not a mere association of mental concepts, just as the symbol is not a 'definition' either, for as such they would not escape human rational and moral limitations. The intelligible presence of the Idea itself evokes and suggests indefinite aspects of itself, constantly awakening new and distinct perspectives on reality, permanently woven into its sacred synthesis. As instruments of application, just like numbers and letters, symbol and analogy allow us to articulate, through relationships of similarity, facts or realities that at first glance have nothing in common, save their own contingency. The necessary relationship of continuity between the whole and the part, between God and the world, and vice versa, is indeed the golden ratio of Creation. A mystery intuited since time immemorial, which Tradition reveals. It is the true logic that, as 'divine grace', operates beyond conventional or formal logic. This permanent bond that unites the worlds, whether visibly or invisibly, allows for the

perpetual possibility of 'awakening', of a return to the universal meaning of existence, effectively an exit from ordinary, amorphous time-space, and an entry into the 'extraordinary' and the sacred. The function of rites has no other purpose than to energise and actualise this ever-latent possibility. Linked to this in particular are intellectual intuition and Eros, or divine Love, rather than 'reason' proper, which is analytical and discriminatory by nature.

37

THE ARTIST

The artist's task is to act as a mediator between the essence of the symbol (or Word) and its manifestation in the temporal world (the work of the Creative Word). Of all creatures, only man is capable of becoming aware of this role, and it is through him that the Universe becomes conscious of itself. The purpose of traditional education is to bring about this realisation, awakening the latent abilities that every human being carries within them; this is the function fulfilled by the guild of artists, led by a master who knows the principles that govern Art.

The learning process is hierarchical and provides the artist with symbolic language. It encompasses the sacred sciences and arts; it is the Alchemy of one's own being and a true path of Initiation. Symbolic support paves the way for the creative process through prescribed rituals. The beauty of the symbol lies in revealing the 'Treasure', which could never be known without its mediation. The rite is rooted in cosmogony and is the symbol in motion. Myth lives in a Time of perpetual ritual action. The purpose of these rituals is to create a state of consciousness that allows the artist to move within the inner space of the soul. An essential part of this meditative state is to allow the harmony of the cycles of life to permeate one's entire existence by experiencing the rhythms of nature, its solitude and serenity.

It is through contemplation that one may access the inner space of the heart where the artist's sole experience of reality takes place. It is then that he may express: 'Truly, just as space is vast, so too is the void within the heart.' He has reached the source and beheld reality face to face; he has beheld himself. Time no longer exists; seer and vision are one. The entire universe has concentrated its rays upon a single point, whose incandescence has returned to the Self.

Sounds, forms, lines, colours and materials will be the means for the awakened soul seeking to express itself as it descends through the arc of the creative cycle, restoring visible, audible or tangible form to what has been experienced. Passive in relation to the Principle of which he is a servant, and active in relation to his Art, the artist creates a harmonious relationship between the universal that animates his work and the particular way in which he gives form to his creation. The work will be the manifestation of the perfection attained by the artist, and to the extent that it is in harmony with the Source, it may be called original. Originality understood in the broadest sense of the word: the realisation of an original conception, and not merely transient individual originality.

"This earthly part of the world is sustained by the knowledge and practice of the Arts and Sciences, which God did not wish the world to be deprived of in order to be perfect (...) And rightly so, the supreme divinity has sent down here among men the choir of the Muses, so that the earthly world might not seem too wild, deprived of the sweetness of music, but rather, might men offer their praises through songs inspired by the Muses to Him who alone is the All and Father of all, and thus might the heavenly praises always be answered, even upon the earth, by a gentle harmony. Certain men, few in number, endowed with a pure soul, have been granted a share in the august task of lifting their gaze towards heaven" (*Corpus Hermeticum*, *Asclepius* 8-9).

38 NOT BY GETTING UP EARLY.

One of the themes emphasised in the initiatory journey is that of hidden enemies, that is, those who are not obvious to the apprentice, or who disguise themselves by feigning virtues, when they are nothing but forms of the old man and serious enemies on the path of Knowledge. They often present themselves in the guise of morality and what is officially accepted as virtuous and even 'religious', which they wittily call 'traditionalism'. Another of the unpleasant ways in which these demons tend to present themselves, directly associated with the one we have just mentioned, is the notion that waking up early in the morning is a virtue, especially in large cities, where the body has lost all connection with the rhythms of nature. This completely normal act is taken by simple-minded individuals as a great thing, an example worthy of emulation, even if it must be imposed by force, as in the case of boarding schools, prisons and barracks. Although, of course, no account is taken of the fact that these 'early risers' get up to stoke the fire of the machine of modern society that is devouring us, which they have created and constantly feed with their diligence.

The proverbial wisdom has coined two well-known sayings regarding this fact. The first says, 'The early bird catches the worm'; this can be understood as a dark joke, when one considers that men today, directly or indirectly, wake up ready to betray, lie, gossip, slander, steal, destroy, etc., with the approval and backing of official bodies amidst general approval.

The second proverb, which gives this article its title, goes: 'Getting up early doesn't make the sun rise any sooner'. It stands in contrast to the first, though it is far more elaborate, as it effectively refutes the simplistic, literal belief underpinning the first and stands as a clear condemnation of one of the greatest and most widespread errors (sins) of our time: the notion that through human actions one can attain what has always been termed, conversely, the Grace of God.

"The spirit blows where it wills" can be read in the sacred text. Yes, where the spirit wills, and not where men determine, or

anywhere, by chance, as a literalist, or a very early-rising 'righteous' person, might understand. A Chinese proverb says: 'Abusing efficiency leads to violence'.

39

SACRED HISTORY

History unfolds as a series of events in time onto which, just as in Geography, vertical energies and powers are projected. Understood in this way, History is punctuated by significant events that represent a rupture in the ordinary, profane temporal plane, which has nothing to do with the chronicles and statistics to which our contemporaries have accustomed us, who are only capable of focusing on certain duly documented anecdotes (always with a self-serving purpose, particularly political, economic, racial or religious). Like space, time is not homogeneous, but has fissures and cracks through which the supra-historical is revealed. On the other hand, the sacred geographical and spatial centre, symbolised by the Sacred Earth – and within each person by their own heart – is also the centre of time, of the timeless, where communication with the higher realms becomes effective.

It is myth that gives meaning to a people's history; the creation of a traditional culture or civilisation always stems from a mythical and superhuman event, in which a spiritual entity manifests itself (almost always through symbolic intermediaries, be they animals, plants, minerals, or through certain human figures, as we are seeing in the sections on Biographies), giving rise to the development of that civilisation. As if it were a subtle umbilical cord, this intimate link that a culture maintains with the invisible and timeless is what enables the periodic and cyclical regeneration of the people who form part of it. The true history of a people, or of a human being, lies in their capacity to comprehend and feel, in all its fullness, the presence of the sacred, to be reintegrated into It, as an indissoluble unity interwoven with multiple relationships and upon which their entire life depends. That is why there have been cultures that have had no history, as we understand it today, because for them the only thing that is valid, the only thing that is real, is that which is not subject to the inexorable laws of becoming. These laws serve, in any case, as a horizontal framework within which the historical destiny of those cultures and civilisations is fulfilled. But for this destiny to have meaning, they must depend entirely on the order expressed by universal laws, which are unchanging and eternal.

40

TRADITION

The multiplicity of traditions is an evolutionary form that the One Tradition of the origins takes on in the cyclical process of descent through the historical ages. And just as in the *Sephirotic* Tree four progressively denser planes separate the First Deity from the Kingdom of this World, so too in time the four ages – of gold, silver, bronze and iron – mark the progressive concealment of that Primordial Tradition under the guise of diverse traditions, each appearing increasingly distinct, to the point of admitting contradictions between them

at the level of their literal meaning, which is the only one within the reach of the generality of men in the present dark age. This is what the biblical myth of the Tower of Babel refers to, concerning the moment when the human race begins to take an interest in the development of civilisation – the arts, the crafts and great technical undertakings – and is ‘punished’ with the confusion of tongues.

Indeed, all solidification or materialisation implies multiplication and divergence. But the multiplicity of traditions is only apparent, and belongs to the illusory plane that Buddhism calls *Samsāra*, and Hinduism identifies with the Veil of Maya. The variety of traditions belongs to the outer circle of the symbol of the Wheel. They are the spokes leading to the Hub or Centre, where the Unanimous Tradition is situated, of which the sages and initiates of all times and places have never ceased to bear witness.

Tradition (from the Latin *tradere*, to transmit) is the transmission of knowledge, understood in terms of its immutable and universal principles, though also in its applications to all spheres of life. Hence the distinction between esotericism and exotericism, which in one way or another exists at the heart of all traditions. The latter is concerned with the moral organisation of human societies (for, as Plato asserts, and despite the modern view, morality and politics are one and the same). The former keeps alive the flame of the ultimate Truth, through the unbroken initiatory chain (which the Kabbalah calls *shelsheth*) for those capable of attaining spiritual realisation proper.

There is therefore a hierarchy between these two functions of Tradition: the external or exoteric forms degenerate and die out when they lose contact with their esoteric core. Take, for example, what happened to Christianity from the 13th century onwards: the severing of ties between the papacy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the initiatory organisations left Christendom defenceless against the onslaught of profane and ‘scientific’ thought, which in recent centuries has sought to correct and ‘improve’ from the outside a traditional doctrine effectively stripped of its intellectual foundations—foundations that do not belong to the exoteric organisation and are the heritage of initiatory knowledge. Hence the current contradiction in the West, torn between an ‘inadequate Christianity’ and a ‘scientific’ knowledge that claims to complete it, yet which—like all that is profane—changes its ‘truths’ to suit the prevailing trends.

41

SACRED GEOGRAPHY

We have already stated that geography (the writing of the earth), conceived as a mythical space intended to reflect the celestial order, is common to all traditional cultures. We wish to recall that this mythical space is the Centre of the world, where time (history) is also viewed as non-successive, being ever new, and regeneration a permanent reality, as it does not lose its original virginity through the capacity for wonder.

In truth, sacred geography is invisible, for there exists the ‘idea’ of a boundless and primordial earth, of a ‘Pure Land’ or an Edenic Garden, which does not exhaust its generative possibilities as it is united with and fertilised by the Spirit. Geography is thus a state of the soul (of living one’s own

existence embedded in the universal), which, in effect, can be symbolically manifested in a landscape, the summit of a mountain, the hollow of a cave, or in any significant topography. Temples and cities were erected in such places, and their construction was carried out according to precise laws derived from a priestly science, revealed by the gods.

42 NOTE:

We hope that, as you have progressed through the teachings contained in this manual—which you should review frequently—you now have new starting points for your research, whilst reading these texts may prove far more thought-provoking, and perhaps even revealing. In any case, these are merely the preliminaries to our comprehensive work, to which you must devote the same determination and enthusiasm as you have shown thus far. You have taken a step forward, even if you are not fully aware of it. If this has become clear to you, redouble your efforts, for you are doing something for yourself and your personal growth, and such dedication is always rewarded in one way or another.

If any doctrinal point still seems obscure or difficult to you, it is suggested that you move on, provided that you have made a genuine effort to overcome the difficulty. The time will come to review these lessons, and then you will discover that those difficulties have been resolved, or no longer exist. After some time, returning to the Programme material, starting from the beginning, is extremely beneficial. Moreover, reading these texts may seem fresh to you at that moment, or you may find in them certain points or topics that you had not previously noticed.



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Nowadays, the science of astrology is often confused with the mere drawing up of horoscopes, which has always been regarded by tradition as secondary, derivative and contingent. This does not mean that there is no value in understanding the planetary influences that govern the day and hour of our birth, the study of which can serve as a practical exercise to familiarise us with this discipline; but it is important not to lose sight of the fact that what is fundamental is to understand the principles and laws that govern the heavens, which are also reflected in the natural order of the earth. We must not forget that it is thanks to the stars that we have the possibility of understanding the laws that regulate time and space. On the one hand, it is the rising point of the Sun and the planets that allows us to have a spatial orientation, whilst it is also the celestial spheres that give us the concept of day and night, week, month or year—that is, of the duration of time.

Always starting from a geocentric perspective, and indeed, taking the observer – man – as the central, immovable point from which we make our calculations, the symbol of the zodiac teaches us to make the ‘spatial’ division of time, pointing north at the Winter Solstice (Capricorn), south at the Summer Solstice (Cancer), east at the Spring Equinox (Aries) and west at the Autumn Equinox (Libra). These four cardinal points or signs are symbolically related to the fourfold division of the day, the month and the year, to the four stages of human life and civilisations, and to the four ages of humanity (Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron), thus enabling us to establish relationships and analogies between natural, historical and cosmic cycles.

The Wheel of the Zodiac appears to complete a full 360° cycle every day, or the 24-hour period it takes for the Earth to rotate on its own axis; the Sun, for its part, makes a journey through the 12 signs over the course of the year, marking the four seasons that govern the laws of agriculture and human life. But the ancients also observed, thanks to the planets, the possibility of understanding other temporal dimensions, which led them to discover the cosmic ages or ‘time of the gods’. An example of this is the 25,920-year period, known to all peoples and explained by the Hindus, the Pythagoreans and Plato alike, forming the cycle known in astronomy as the precession of the equinoxes, which has always been viewed in relation to the historical periods of humanity. Taking the Spring Equinox as a reference point, during this period (of 25,920 years, called ‘the great day of Brahma’ in Hindu tradition) the Sun traverses the 12 zodiacal signs in a circular motion inverted to that of the
, taking 2,160 years to complete each one. Cultures left clear evidence of their knowledge of this cycle, and the Age of Taurus was symbolised by the Egyptians (the Apis bull) and the Cretans, just as the Age of Aries (the Ram) was announced by Moses to the Jewish people, and the Age of Pisces (the Fishes) by Christianity, which identified with that sign. We know, thanks to the knowledge bequeathed to us by Tradition, that we are currently experiencing the transition point between Pisces and Aquarius, which

clearly indicates that we are at the end of a cosmic period, and that the Golden Age or kingdom of Saturn (the planet which, in antiquity, ruled over Aquarius and Capricorn) is approaching.



[fig.13](#)

44

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE SWORD

More than any other weapon, it is perhaps the sword that best serves to represent the struggle that any aspirant to Knowledge must undertake at a certain point in their process against those who constitute their true enemies: those they carry within themselves. This combat is the ‘great holy war’ of which the prophet Muhammad speaks when, in one of his sayings, he states: ‘We have returned from the lesser holy war to the greater holy war’, thus indicating that the former is but an external representation or a symbol of the latter. In this regard, we must not forget that the sword is the principal attribute of the god Mars, the numen that instils the warrior spirit in man, whilst at the same time endowing him with the rigour necessary to distinguish error from truth and to negate negation. In fact, almost all solar and civilising heroes and gods defeat the powers of darkness and chaos (represented in all myths by chthonic and telluric entities such as the Titans, dragons or serpents) aided by swords, or by any other similar weapon, such as the spear, arrows, or the single- or double-edged axe. In this sense, all these are weapons traditionally associated with the ray and the dazzling brightness of lightning; that is to say, they have a direct connection with the symbolism of light, understood as an essentially fertilising energy, whilst at the same time destroying all that opposes the higher, namely, pitch-black darkness and ignorance. It is in this spirit that the Germanic hero Siegfried, or the Christian knight Saint George—the human reflection of Saint Michael the Archangel, the leader of the heavenly host—fights.

All of them are exemplary models of that inner struggle, the very one suggested by Christ (who is the ‘true light which, coming into

this world, enlightens every man”, as we read in the Gospel of John) when, in driving out the merchants who desecrate the Temple of Jerusalem, he warns them that he has not “come to bring peace but a sword”. And that sword which he brings is none other than the power of his Word, from which Truth and Justice emanate (see Revelation 1:16), and against which the darkness of ignorance—represented by those merchants who trade in the most sacred things—is powerless. These would be the true hidden enemies – egos – (who sometimes appear in the form of external figures), those who keep us bound to the lowest states, and from whom we must free ourselves or ‘detach’ in order to access the true Life promised by Initiation and the Teaching. They must therefore be overcome with the strength bestowed by Knowledge, that is, on the plane of Ideas; for it is to the extent that we devote ourselves to them that we will be able to recognise and identify them, and thus expel them from the Temple we build within our hearts.

In this regard, we shall mention that the sword, like the spear, is a complementary symbol of the cup, as is the case in the legend of the Holy Grail; and since this vessel, like the Grail itself, is a symbol of the Doctrine and of Knowledge, the sword is a symbol of the path that must be followed to attain it, that is to say, that which governs our intellect and conduct, enabling us to become truly aware of our inner axis, and with it of the ‘Middle Way’ which points to the vertical direction towards which we must constantly strive. In fact, the sword (like the various weapons mentioned above) has been regarded by all traditions as a symbol of the Axis of the World, an idea that is present when the sword takes the place of the balance beam, the universal symbol of Justice and cosmic equilibrium, that is, of harmony understood as a manifestation of peace. This ‘axial’ significance of the sword must never be lost sight of, for it is what gives it its deepest meaning, since such peace, born of the reconciliation of opposites, is expressed not only in the external and social order, but above all in the internal and spiritual order, which is, after all, the objective pursued by the ‘great holy war’.

45

THE SUPPER

In this Programme, the foods that nourish the physical body are regarded as symbols of the spiritual foods, which are what nourish the human soul. This aspect, which modern society is unaware of, is what gives every meal a ritual and sacred character. The stomach, and the digestive system in general, which occupies the middle and central part of the body, represents a true alchemical *Athanor*, the forge of Vulcan, thanks to which the positive substances in food are refined and pass into the blood (which gives life to the whole organism), whilst the negative, useless or simply coarse elements pass into the labyrinthine passages of the intestine for subsequent absorption and elimination. In other words, the process of separating the coarse from the subtle takes place. We already know that for any traditional culture the body is a sacred entity and its functioning corresponds to the cycles and rhythms of the universe, also constituting a receptacle for divine effusions. When eating, man assimilates the external cosmos into his own corporeal and subtle cosmos; that is to say, he integrates harmoniously with the world that surrounds him and of which he forms

part. And this communion produces a joy analogous, on another plane, to that experienced through the emotion generated by the contemplation of Beauty, for to live on Beauty and Love is also nourishment. This, and no other, was the original meaning of the Greco-Roman bacchanalia and the communal eating practised at certain festivals across all traditions, which were above all collective ritual meals where worship was offered to the celestial energies through the manifestation of the energies of life and nature.

The Supper holds a particularly significant meaning. Owing to its nocturnal nature and the fact that it precedes sleep—which is a symbol of death and the entry into another state of being—it had, and continues to have, a special importance across various traditions, as is the case with Christianity. The Last Supper that Jesus Christ offered to the apostles (prior to his crucifixion) instituted the mystery of the Eucharist under the forms of Bread (body) and Wine (blood-spirit), plant products drawn from nature and prepared and fermented by Fire, the source of light and heat. The Last Supper, in addition to the sacrificial and spiritual aspect it represents, is a symbol of the intimate bond of solidarity and brotherly love that should unite all men who accept their condition as such. In this sense, the word *cenacle*, which derives from *cena* (supper), denotes the place where men gather who essentially share the same ideas, in relation to which the feelings and passions proper to humanity must be in perfect harmony.



46

APOLLO'S LYRE AND ORPHEUS' FLUTE

It is impossible to conceive of time without space as a point of reference, for it is only when it enters into a relationship with space, through movement, that it becomes intelligible. This is because time possesses, by its very nature, a superior quality, being in some way less fixed than space. Music, the art of rhythm and harmony par excellence, is undoubtedly the medium that most obviously and beautifully reveals the cyclical and recurring nature of time, refuting the absurd linear, uniform and quantitative conception of it forged by the profane mindset. Number is the structure of rhythm, and as such is a manifest 'quality' that is clearly distinguished from mere agitation, just as music and melody are distinguished from noise; this 'auditory' conception of the cosmos brings us closer to the invisible, to the subtle, to all that lies beyond sensory perception in general.

Divine power thus creates the cosmos from rhythms, from othernesses, which are now in balance, now out of balance, without ever straying from the divine tuning fork

. Beauty, one of the divine names, manifests itself through the perfection of forms, and these, before becoming coarse, ideally constitute the subtle and formative framework of the universe, the invisible architecture of the cosmos. This architecture is truly a divine and marvellous language, the apprehension of which is directly linked to the intellectual intuition of the heart, the sanctuary of the human temple and the seat of all theophanies. The Platonic music of the spheres perfectly illustrates this conception by describing the cosmos as an immense sound box that does nothing but amplify virtual energies until they are brought to their effective realisation, only to return them to their origin, as sparks, flashes or transient reflections of an immutable archetype. *Solve et coagula* are, in Hermetic Alchemy (or condensation-dissipation in the Far East), the formula for this simultaneous dual movement that makes possible the wonder of universal and individual existence and their indefinite interrelationships.

The qualities of sounds, linked as we have seen to the planets, are also linked to the elements. And likewise the instruments that reproduce them—wind, string, percussion, etc.—have air and earth as their terrestrial modes, and fire as their celestial mode, since the awakening of the ‘inner fire’ is the primary mission of music, especially sacred music. As a manifestation of Universal Harmony, music potentially contains all these energies within itself. And it is because ‘like attracts like’ that its effect on the human psyche logically awakens its respective counterparts, as well as the power to synchronise them with one another. The different tempos and modes recognised in classical Western scores merely translate the effect of the soul’s energies on musical creation and vice versa: *andante*, *allegro*, *patetico*, *brio*, *moto*, are nothing but states of the soul which in themselves reveal an internal drama between various rhythms and characters, the allegorical description of which we find time immemorial in all ancient myths and cosmogonies.

47 NOTE:

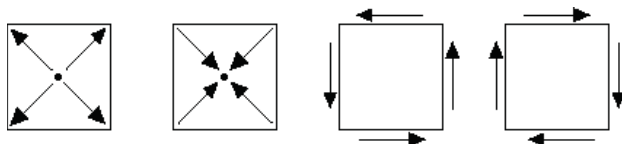
There are times in this work when, on the surface, nothing seems to happen. We sometimes complain about the times when we are agitated; everything is in motion and storms rock us. But there are others, even worse, when absolutely nothing happens. These are the periods that those navigating the quest, the adventure of Knowledge, call ‘dead calm’. The stillness here is pure rigidity and despair. This nothingness is not the Ein Sof of the Hebrew Kabbalah, but its inverted reflection. Everything appears as a dead end, a closed door or a trifle. There is nothing harder than being stuck without receiving the breath or the wind of the Spirit, or of the spirits, at least.

This is where we must redouble our efforts. This is the moment when we must repeat our rituals time and again and realise that there is no life, nor work, without sacrifice. Fighting at this time is a necessity, and the more fierce, intelligent, focused and honest our inner struggle is, the greater the chance of victory.

48

MAGIC SQUARES

We have seen time and again that the symbol of the Earth is the square. This geometric figure with four equal sides is the expression of the concept of the quaternary and immediately conveys to us the idea of order, harmony and balance between the different tensions of its parts, which converge and neutralise at a common point from which they also emanate permanently.



We also know that the square, when rendered three-dimensionally, becomes a cube, and it is evident that this solid constitutes a symbol of the solid and a clear example of what a structure is. All these mental images are immediately associated when working esoterically with the square, which is the representation, on the plane, of the Earth, taken in its broadest sense, namely: the space-time coordinates (vertical and horizontal) within which humankind is inscribed, which also symbolically mark and delimit the figure of the square. In traditional civilisations, this figure was sacred – like its complement, the circle – as a symbol that transmits and receives the energy-forces of the unknown, which it manifests, being the repository of a powerful magical charge, capable of being transformed and used for various ritual and cosmological purposes. And if that magical charge multiplies and projects symmetrically, creating the grid (itself bounded within a square) where the scattered elements come together and coalesce into a whole, thanks to an unchanging order and various particularities that become general laws, the generative and protective power of this figure is increased; it encloses within itself the very universal laws of the entire Creation, and translates them with the same discourse, a fact witnessed by the numerical and geometric symbols and all those that can be related to them in the mathematical harmony of these associations.

Almost all peoples and traditions have used these magic squares and have regarded them both as instruments of knowledge and as powerful talismans capable of ordering and also unleashing the indefinite energies and forces that are constantly shaping the cosmos. The most distinct of these pantacles or mandalas, found, amongst other traditions, in China, Islam, Jewish esotericism, and likewise amongst the adherents of the Hermetic Tradition, is the one given below, known as the magic square of 15, or natural square, in which the sum of the numbers from 1 to 9, inscribed within the squares, (whether vertically, horizontally or diagonally) always adds up to 15. By way of illustration, we might note that Chinese civilisation derived the social and political organisation of its empire from this structure.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

Likewise, in the Hebrew Kabbalah, these numbers are replaced by letters of corresponding numerical value, opening the way to all manner of images and concepts related to words and their roots, which amounts to working with the Science of Names.

Similarly, alchemists associated four ways of constructing this square numerically with the four elements, and linked it to the three essential principles (it has three columns), which, in a continuous dance, produce the illusion of matter.

6	1	8
7	5	3
2	9	4

cuadrado del
elemento fuego

2	7	6
9	5	1
4	3	8

cuadrado del
elemento aire

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

cuadrado del
elemento agua

6	7	2
1	5	9
8	3	4

cuadrado del
elemento tierra

Astrologers, too, have worked with these squares laden with numerical, alphabetic and cosmogonic symbols, and have associated them with the planets and the celestial map (just as alchemists did with metals).

Below we present the correspondence between the various planets and the corresponding magic squares: the natural square, or base-15 square, is attributed to Saturn. The 4-column square with a base of 34 (according to the numbers assigned to the corresponding cells, which, without ever repeating, always add up to that figure in any direction) is dedicated to Jupiter. The 5-column magic square, whose numerical base is 65, is attributed to Mars. The Sun is associated with the 6×6-column square, whose base number is 111. The 7-column square is attributed to Venus and its base is 175. Mercury's magic square contains 8 columns per side and its base number is 260. And finally, that of the Moon, with 9 columns, is based on the number 369. As can be seen, the connections with the *Sephirothic* Tree of Life are evident, leading us to understand that in truth all the disciplines that make up the Hermetic Tradition, including Magic, do nothing but express a single, unified Science, which manifests itself in diverse languages, orders and forms.

49

THE LIGHT

When various traditional texts speak of the Light, it must be understood above all as a symbol of Intelligence, with the material aspect constituting its tangible and symbolic support. Understood in this way

Light represents a divine force or energy, the central, inner, and generative core from which the entire life of the cosmic and individual being radiates. That intelligible and subtle Light proceeds from the fire of the Spirit, just as physical light comes from the enormous mass of fire that is the Sun. Hence, a symbolic transposition is constantly made between the two. This quality of light is clearly indicated by the very process of Initiation, for this is fundamentally conceived as a progressive ‘inner illumination’ that dispels the darkness of ignorance, which is equated with the profane and subhuman.

On a universal scale, this process is analogous to *the* cosmogonic *Fiat Lux* (Let there be Light), brought about at the beginning of time by the Word or Logos that gives rise to creation. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... In him was life, and that life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not received it.” (John 1:1–5). “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death a light has dawned.” (Matthew 4:16). These Gospel quotations naturally refer to Christ, for in Christian tradition he embodies that illuminating action of the Spirit which penetrates dark and substantial matter, bringing it from potentiality into actuality, or from chaos into order. The Sun repeats this rite daily when, rising in the East, it illuminates the world submerged in the darkness of night. It is interesting to note that the term ‘to give birth’ or ‘birth’ applies equally to physical childbirth and spiritual birth, with the difference that the former requires external support, whilst the latter takes place in the most complete solitude, within oneself, in the innermost recesses of the heart’s cavern.

50

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

These two terms in this section are closely linked to the concept of ‘natural’, and one might well ask what each person understands by this. The same applies to the current concept of health. Indeed, in traditional or ‘primitive’ societies, the concept of health-illness (two opposites that do not contradict each other) is quite different from the modern one, which refers to it solely as the hypothetical functioning of an ‘ideal’ physical body that we possess, and takes no account whatsoever of the interrelation of this body with the Universe and the multiple forces that constitute it. Moreover, contemporary mainstream thinking excludes the latter from the health-illness dichotomy, due to a sort of association with evil, which modern man denies, attributing to that ‘evil’ the characteristics of what he dislikes and refuses to acknowledge in himself; for this reason, good is not the constant conjunction of opposites, but an imaginary state to be attained, which shifts with the winds of fashion and the relativity of customs and traditions. In this sense, it would be interesting to ask ourselves a question: what is the strange association currently made between health and certain sports? What connection do certain gymnastic exercises and forced movements—true forms of corporal punishment—have with health?

Rather, in the process of Initiation—which corresponds to a complete reversal of our lives (for profane conceptions begin to give way to sacred ones), and which certainly includes a descent into

underworlds, the symptoms perceived are not ‘healthy’ (as attested by the mythical and exemplary lives of the great masters, initiates and philosophers), nor ‘beautiful’ in a stereotypical reading of these terms, but rather present themselves as great *shocks* from which illness, pain, and indeed death are by no means absent.

On the other hand, we must confront the artificial institution of hygiene as morality, convention as morality, the ‘healthiness’ of work for work’s sake, and ‘good’ and ‘correct’ attitudes and customs as equivalents of the good. In the same vein, ‘feeling good’ and ‘spiritual *comfort*’—and likewise economic prosperity—are understood as ‘good’. The formalisation of a solemn, dignified and pompous attitude is also considered good or healthy, to the extent of confusing it with the sublime. Examples of this are certain civil ceremonies where the affectation and pretence inherent in this sort of attitude—based on a complete lack of belief in the most basic values—become glaringly obvious. Consequently, all this must be feigned so that the deception is not uncovered (played out on a stage within the farce), which ultimately matters little, since this is what is considered ‘life’, in which one must adopt certain postures to be respected or at least not criticised by one’s neighbours, and where the most dishonourable thing would not be to commit crimes, but to lose one’s ‘dignity’ because of it—which would amount to appearing in the newspaper for this reason. In other words, being ashamed of being discovered and making a fool of oneself amidst widespread criminal activity. Matters and implications which, in our view and understanding, have nothing to do with ‘mental health’ or ‘moral hygiene’.

What, ultimately, are health and illness? Frankly, it is difficult to define ‘health’, and it is most likely indefinable. In any case, if health is anything, or at least a state, it would be one of harmony and balance amidst constant imbalance. And this is only achieved on a spiritual level, even though the body suffers the aches of pain and the forebodings of death. What is poison to some is, for others (or for themselves under different conditions and circumstances), a life-saving remedy.

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It follows logically that if man's knowledge and awareness of himself and the world do not extend beyond the limits of his senses, he is bound to fail in his empirical and dialectical attempt to find an answer or proof for everything that surpasses and transcends him. The very notion of God does nothing but encompass and summarise that whole in a single word. As a created and existing being, the human being can conceive of nothing but that which exists or is in some way; to this condition we must add another no less important one: form. If the formless or supra-individual escapes rational understanding, which is bound by the limits of temporal succession and duality, how much more difficult will it be to conceive of the unlimited, of a non-something, that is, of the unmanifested, of that which completely transcends all conditioned existence? The One and Unparalleled can necessarily be known only by Itself; how could God, the Creator or the Universal Subject par excellence, be an object of knowledge to anyone other than Itself?

The unanimous affirmation of Unity by all traditions is not based on the existence or non-existence of God, but on the Absolute and Metaphysical Non-Duality of all its possible aspects, whether these are unmanifested or manifested. Every affirmation presupposes a pre-existing notion, and a negation a prior affirmation. Without the prior and primordial idea of a Universal Principle, there would be neither deists, nor atheists, nor polytheists. The atheist, for example, in order to deny God, has first had to assume His existence (His Being). Nevertheless, in the face of this confusion, just as a certain form of deism is justified exoterically by the need to evoke the ultimate object of faith, so too is a certain form of atheism justified—provided, of course, that it is understood not as a pure and absurd negation of everything that is not understood, but as a logical rejection of the moral and sentimental stereotypes of God currently offered by official religion. Eastern metaphysical doctrines and archaic traditions, for example, are neither deistic nor atheistic. The prolific multitude of gods that populate traditional pantheons merely reveal the infinite richness of nuances and aspects possessed by the One and Unnameable, and have nothing to do with the current version of polytheism. The full and true name of God, says Kabbalistic tradition, is unpronounceable; it can only be spelled out (YHVH). The indefinite combinations to which its letters lend themselves (as contemplated by the Kabbalistic science of the *Temurah*) likewise create and produce all its possible names and aspects insofar as they enter into relation with the manifested.

In truth, God does not exist if by existence we mean any conditioned mode of Being; if God were to exist in this sense, He would no longer be Infinite and Eternal (nor the Creator, the Supreme Artisan), but a creature, something created, in short. His infinite transcendence is matched by His absolute immanence; God is everything without exception, since nothing could emerge from the indivisible Unity of the Whole and be a separate 'other'. 'There is no divinity (or reality) but *Allah*,' goes the Islamic maxim. Certainly, the limitations of human and rational language are the first to hinder the expression of notions that lie beyond the reach of definition and dialectic, for every definition is already a limitation of

Unlimited Reality. From the core to the periphery of Being there exist innumerable intermediate states, graphically represented by indefinite concentric circles around a single point.

Naturally, the Centre or God in Himself is not the periphery, just as our body is not our true being; yet if all is a single, inseparable reality, Being and Non-Being, prior or posterior, beginning and end, are human parameters of understanding that are unified in the Middle Way. All beings are letters whose coming together forms a discourse that proves the existence of God (that is, the presence of God in all things), that is to say, the 'Intelligence' that utters that discourse; for there can be no discourse without a verb, nor anything written without a writer.



52

SPIRIT-SOUL-BODY

In section [50](#) of this module, under the heading 'Diet and Health', we have highlighted certain errors and literal interpretations that can become genuine obstacles to knowledge. These included topics such as the substitution of the supernatural for the natural, and mistaken concepts regarding health and illness (simply linked to good and evil), as well as erroneous views on 'mysticism' and 'spirituality', linking them to certain preventive and hygienic practices and even to a certain kind of morality (amounting to mere sentimentality and devotions) in place of the authentic path, which holds the secrets of Sacred Science. These misconceptions share a common denominator: the attempt to materialise the spiritual (even with good intentions, namely: to make it more accessible, which is in any case an impossibility), an error characteristic of today's society, which believes exclusively in materialism, which seeks to be profane and desacralised, and which does nothing but deny the Spirit, aligning itself with that which is not. We shall now turn to certain observations concerning spirit-soul-body and also to what is meant by the internal-external; for we believe that confusion may arise around these topics, some of it stemming from problems of terminology, most of it from superficial assessments, surely rooted in limited ideas, of the sort that circulate so profusely today.

Firstly, we shall say that the spirit-body dichotomy does not hold true for Traditional Doctrine, which recognises a third element, the soul (the anima or psyche), between the two. In terms of the Kabbalistic code in which we are expressing ourselves and with which our reader is familiar, we shall say that the first triad, with *Kether* at its head—that is, the plane of *Atziluth*—could be equated with the spirit, whilst that of *Asiyah* and the realm of *Malkuth* would be assimilated to the body. The soul (anima or psyche) would be what the Kabbalists call the six *sefirot* of 'construction', that is, the great intermediate plane, subdivided in turn into two worlds: that of *Beriyah* and that of *Yetsirah*, the higher and lower psyches, respectively. As our reader already knows, all these planes complement one another and constitute the

emanations of the ‘One without equal’ within the realm of manifestation. However, modern culture, particularly since Descartes, has established an antinomic duality between spirit and body (always excluding one in favour of the other), leading to a lack of knowledge of the true Spirit, which has been supplanted by the soul (the animic or psychic) as a counterfeit of the spiritual. All this is exacerbated by the fact that in the present day this psychic aspect is expressed far more in its lower degree than in its higher one. However, –despite this deception of the soul masquerading as the spirit, to which we shall return later– the contemporary terms ‘spirit’ and ‘body’ are sufficiently vivid and clear for us to be able to say something on the matter. Especially when there are currently a number of ‘schools’ that have coined certain catchphrases such as ‘love your body’, which are the object of admiration and even worship, just like the physical body to which they refer and with which they intend – oh, the irony! to move to other ‘states’ (which they virtually deny), through a sort of ‘belief’ that assumes that by means of the repeated and mechanical exaltation of matter one can reach somewhere other than the very worship of the corporeal, the relative and the limited, which amounts to the exaltation of one of our egos, as fallacious as the others. In this sense, it must be said that spirit and body are inverted in relation to one another. From the spirit’s point of view, the spirit is primary. From the body’s perspective, the body comes first. Likewise, from *Kether*, *Atziluth* is the first plane and *Asiyah* the last. From *Malkhuth*, *Asiyah* is primary and *Atsiluth* final.



We wish to clarify that no traditional sacred text speaks of ‘love your body’, a concept impossible to find in Antiquity, though not unknown to it. There are notable examples to the contrary; in the Christian Gospel, for instance, the first great commandment is to love the Lord (your God) above all things. These words, moreover, have an essential *raison d’être* and serve as warnings that must not be forgotten: namely, the primacy of the spiritual order over the corporeal-material-superficial order, which must always be remembered so as not to fall into the social error we are currently experiencing. We would also like to point out, incidentally, that what many people currently understand by ‘feeling’, as a guarantee of certainty, is highly relative. That ‘feeling’ which serves as their guarantee could be just as conditioned as ‘thinking’ or ‘believing’ in consumer society or in any other triviality or matter. ‘Feeling’ may be nothing more than an excessive exaltation of the ego, and one comes to ‘feel’ – and to foster that ‘feeling’ – about almost anything. Totalitarian systems and football stadiums have provided a good example of this.

The same applies to the internal and the external. It may be easy for some to define the external, associating it with their physicality. But what is

The inner self? The truly inner self—would that be the plane of *Yetsirah*, associated with our lower psyche, or even that of *Beriyah*, linked to the higher? Or are those two worlds merely stepping stones to reach our authentic Self? Would not the innermost be the most authentic and profound, and also the most unknown?

It is not through the ‘natural’ that peoples and men have come to know the supernatural, but rather the reverse: from the supernatural—that is, from the understanding of Transcendent and Eternal Unity, and even of metaphysical Non-Being—is that they have derived their conduct and their perceptions of themselves, which amounts to understanding their own nature and that of the world around them. Likewise, it is not through the ‘body’ – and even less so through what is understood today by the corporeal – that one reaches the Spirit; on the contrary, a literal and fixed view of corporeality constitutes a definite obstacle to the perception of what is authentically spiritual. And far worse still is what happens when the body is clearly separated from the spirit, attributing to the latter characteristics that fall directly within the realm of the psyche, which amounts to confusing the psychological and its complex intricacies with true spirituality.

53 NOTE:

At this stage of the Teaching, it may be that you still do not know or clearly understand what the content of this manual truly is. Do not, then, take it for granted as is usually the case, but study it again by re-reading everything it contains in depth and with the utmost slowness (slowing down time). This humility—or rather, this honesty with oneself—is far nobler and more productive than assuming what one does not yet know or hastily labelling that which one wishes to dismiss in order to get out of the way once more. These re-readings will bring you more than one surprise and offer you numerous perspectives which, at this moment, you may not have expected to encounter. We believe that the above suggestion is valid and that we are justified in making it, backed by our experience in running our Programme.

54

ALCHEMY

There are moments in the process of knowledge that Alchemy calls putrefaction and nigredo. These are dissolving stages and states in which the adept visits the bowels of the earth and wanders through the corridors of inner darkness. This wandering is analogous to that described in the *Bardo Thodol* or Tibetan Book of the Dead (and similarly in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, also known as *The Book of the Soul's Journey into the Light of Day*). It is the journey beyond the grave, which is likened to the initiatory journey and the path experienced by the Shaman in his ecstasies amongst ‘primitive’ peoples. A journey which, in both great civilisations and archaic traditions, is described as an adventure full of dangers and struggles, in which battles are fought and difficulties arise (such as having to cross rivers), and which refers both to the *post-mortem* journey of the soul and to the death of that soul in this life.



[fig. 14](#)

This journey amidst flashes of shadow and light is represented in alchemical iconography in various ways, as this science recounts, through lived experience, the process of Initiation (the opening of Consciousness and Knowledge), through the darknesses within oneself, with which we must not identify; much less deny them.

This is also related to the idea of Karma, that is, to action-reaction, and to the purging of one's own errors (sins) and the responsibility we bear for them. What might be attained through the purification brought about by these cathartic rites, or in terms of the Royal Art, by calcining these putrid dampnesses, or as some of today's students put it, 'alchemising' them, so to speak.



[fig. 15](#)

55

THE BIRTH OF HISTORY I

History, understood as the written record of the most significant facts and events occurring in a given era, is a relatively recent phenomenon, and even more so if we consider the actual duration

corresponds to the complete cycle of humanity. We must go back to approximately the 6th century BCE to find the first properly historical written accounts. It is interesting to note that, according to traditional accounts, the 6th century BCE marked a critical moment in the development of the human cycle, a period of great changes that affected almost all the peoples and civilisations of antiquity. Broadly speaking, there is a readjustment of traditional doctrine, although there were instances where this readjustment occurred as a result of the loss of a significant part of that very doctrine, as was the case with the Jewish people, who experienced the Babylonian captivity following the first destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. In this regard, we must not forget that during that era a further step was taken in the process of consolidation that, since primordial times, has been taking place in all spheres of human social and spiritual life. And to ensure that the memory of many things did not disappear forever, it was necessary to preserve it in historical and sacred texts.

To give a few examples, it must be said that during that period the Roman civilisation took shape following the era of the legendary kings; in Greece, Pythagoreanism emerged, which at its core inherited the ancient Orphic mysteries, marking the dawn of the Classical era; in China, there was a break with its millennia-old Tradition, giving rise to Taoism and Confucianism, the former representing metaphysical and cosmological doctrine, and the latter the more external aspects, such as the laws and rites underpinning the social body.

This temporal barrier, which undoubtedly corresponds to the 6th century BC, is one of the reasons why, in their research, most scholars encounter real difficulty when attempting to chronologically classify – and, of course, to ascertain with any degree of accuracy – what took place in the periods preceding that century. And this difficulty is compounded by the fact that almost everything the classical authors have bequeathed to us is expressed in a language where the concrete reality of things is harmoniously interwoven with the poetics of myth, legend and symbol; a language that ‘official’ historians certainly cannot comprehend, saturated as they are with a rationalism that is clearly outdated and inadequate.

The same cannot be said of most ancient historians, who in their craft were true interpreters and possessed a perfect understanding of traditional doctrine; consequently, the study of their works is of inestimable help in understanding the real, sacred history of peoples and civilisations. In this sense, the history recounted by these authors can be seen as yet another expression of the soul of mankind (analogous to the soul of the world); of the genius and spirit that presides over the birth and constant regeneration of a culture and a civilisation.

And if myth appears in these narratives as an integral part of them, it is because myth is the vertical connection to the timeless and simultaneous, and therefore the ever-present possibility of establishing a salvific bond with the divine and celestial principles upon which all things depend, including, naturally, History itself, which is ultimately nothing more than a symbol of something else, and in this case a symbol or receptacle where, so to speak, the memory of the world is stored. For

this reason, in certain medieval and Renaissance documents belonging to specific initiatory organisations, knowledge of History was as essential as that of the Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Geometry.

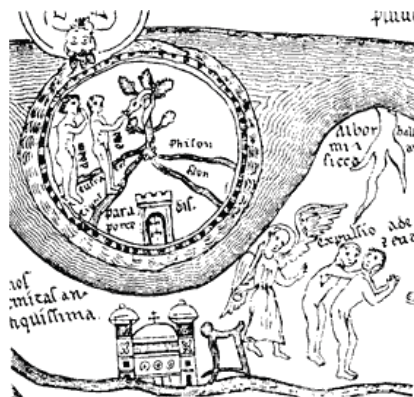
56

THE BIRTH OF HISTORY II

In the West, it is in Greece that history begins to be recorded in writing. And first and foremost we must mention Herodotus (5th century BC), known as the ‘Father of History’, who, in his book aptly titled *History*, records not only the historical events of the Greeks, but also those of the Egyptians, Persians and other cultures, having travelled across almost the entire known world. The book consists of nine volumes (let us recall that nine is the circular number par excellence), and it is quite significant that each of them was dedicated to a Muse, as if they had been directly inspired by them. We should note, in this regard and as a highly revealing fact, that the Muse Clio, who presides over History, was born of the marriage of Zeus-Jupiter to Mnemosyne, Memory.

Centuries later we find Pliny the Elder, who wrote **Natural History**, a study of the creatures of nature (including mythical ones) across its three kingdoms: animal, plant and mineral; we also have his near-contemporary Josephus, who bequeathed to us **Antiquities of the Jews** and **The Jewish War**; we must also remember Titus Livius, who wrote a monumental *History of Rome*, and Julius Caesar, who bequeathed to us *The Gallic Wars*; and Plutarch, with *Isis and Osiris* and *Parallel Lives*. Closer to our own time is Alfonso X the Wise, author, amongst other works, of an unfinished *History of Spain* and a more extensive *General History*, which in reality—drawing on the Bible and all the ancient chronicles he could gather as sources—summarises the Sacred History of mankind from its beginnings up to the 13th century, the era in which he reigned.

In view of all the above, it may be said that any attempt to reconstruct the historical past undertaken today must necessarily involve an understanding of the traditional doctrine of cycles, which also includes an understanding of the symbols and myths that have invariably been repeated everywhere.



[fig.16](#)

Note: The relationship between History and Geography has already been discussed in the course of this Programme. We wish to emphasise the interrelation between Time (History) and Space (Geography) because some link must exist between these two coordinates for cosmic existence to be possible.

In the figure above, one can see the world map divided into four parts emanating from a virtual centre, perfectly comparable to the four great temporal ages and their division – valid for any sub-cycle – projected from a fifth mythical age. The existence of this mythical time and this virtual space, coexisting perpetually in their origins, is what permits and justifies any attempt to establish analogies between what we today call Geography and History, without which they would be meaningless.

For the ancients, this was the case; and since these sciences clearly correspond to their conceptions of Time and Space, any other modern science seeking the relationships between these two coordinates ought, by right, to pay attention to this interrelation and to those conceptions, known to all cultures since time immemorial, and not to regard Time and Space as separate matters.



[Home Page](#)



Among the many legacies of the Middle Ages, inherited in turn from the Greeks and Romans, are the so-called 'liberal arts', seven disciplines that encompassed all the knowledge of the era, and which were divided as follows: Grammar, Dialectic (sometimes replaced by Logic), Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy. The seven liberal arts formed the backbone around which the whole of medieval society's cultural life revolved. And when we say 'cultural', we are not referring solely to intellectual and speculative activity, as taught in the universities and scholastic centres that existed in the major cities of Christian Europe, but also to the manual and practical work carried out in schools, workshops and craft guilds.

In the Middle Ages, the divorce between theory and practice, the mind and the hand, science and art, had not yet taken place. And this intertwining of art and science is clearly highlighted in the famous adage: 'Science without art is nothing'.

For example, in the construction of a cathedral or monastery, intellectual and manual activity were seamlessly combined: the idea conceived in the mind was brought to life in stone thanks to the effort and skill of the hand, and this was equally true of any other trade or craft. The origins of the liberal arts and sciences can be traced back to the Greek and Roman schools, particularly those of Athens and Rome, without overlooking the significant contribution of Islamic culture. They were called 'liberal' because, as the great Spanish king Alfonso X the Wise said, 'they require the learner to be entirely free from all other cares and hindrances', that is to say, they demanded full and total dedication to their study and research.

Permanent analogical correspondences were established between each of the liberal arts, to the extent that one contained and encompassed the others. However, this did not prevent them from also forming a perfectly hierarchical whole, a scale that allowed the student to advance in an orderly and gradual manner along the path of their inner evolution.

In this regard, the liberal arts were divided into two distinct groups: the *trivium* (the threefold path) and the *quadrivium* (the fourfold path). The *trivium* comprised Grammar, Dialectic and Rhetoric, whilst the *quadrivium* comprised Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy. Through the first three, one learnt to think and reason properly by means of the knowledge and meaning of language (Grammar), its logical coherence (Dialectic), and finally, through its application to discourse and speech (Rhetoric), all of which are true supports and vehicles of thought. Only through the *trivium*, through the words, voices and names of things, could one gain access to the sciences of the *quadrivium*, which were superior to the former in that they expressed, and continue to express, a more essential and profound knowledge. The four sciences of the *quadrivium* related directly to the study of rhythms and cycles, of proportion and measure, which, as we know, constitute the

of all things. To *the trivium* and the *quadrivium* was sometimes added the *bivium*, which comprised Alchemy and Astrology.



[fig.17](#)

On the other hand, in Christian esotericism, the seven liberal arts corresponded to the seven degrees of initiation, analogous to the seven planetary heavens, which represent a hierarchy of spiritual states. Grammar was likened to the Moon, Dialectic to Mercury, Rhetoric to Venus, Arithmetic to the Sun, Music to Mars, Geometry to Jupiter, and Astronomy to Saturn. Let us note that the centre of the seven arts is occupied by Arithmetic and by the sphere of the Sun, which indeed occupies the centre of the planets in Astronomy. This is important, for Arithmetic is, from an esoteric point of view, the science of numbers, Numerology or Arithmosophy. And just as the Sun occupies the centre of its system, bringing light to all its farthest reaches, Arithmetic organises and orders all the other sciences, and helps to unite and relate them all to one another. This is clear with regard to numerical relationships, which link Music to Geometry (a connection expressed directly in the proportions of architectural forms) and also to the knowledge of Astronomy through the harmony of the celestial spheres. But this importance of number is also present in the construction of spoken and written discourse, of voices and words, as is easily seen in poetry.

In all this, one can discern a legacy of the Pythagorean tradition within medieval culture and within initiatory societies and groups. Ultimately, this cosmogonic aspect of the liberal arts was nothing other than the

very foundation that allowed access to ontological and metaphysical reality.

59 NOTE:

You will have noticed that the concepts of hard work and rigour are present in this manual; these are fundamentally intellectual in nature, in the broader sense in which we have been using the term.

However, that very same rigorous focus on our studies must not prevent us – at this stage of the Teaching –

from expressing ourselves in our environment in accordance with the measure of each person's capabilities. And whilst the Hermetic Tradition places the emphasis on individual learning, this can be carried out in a group setting, provided there is the guidance and support of an intellectual framework. In this sense, this Introduction to Sacred Science fulfils these requirements and can be taken as a basis for the Work. According to the Christian promise, when two or more people gather invoking the Holy Name, Christ will be among them.

Furthermore, it will have been observed that the Programme involves a didactic approach, that is to say, an orderly structure that is sufficiently flexible and rich in possibilities to be followed by people of different temperaments and in different cultural contexts.

60

MAGIC SQUARES

We have spoken of magic squares and in particular of the natural 9-cell square, or that of Saturn (see section [No. 48](#)). We shall now work with the squares corresponding to the seven planets, using them as tools to begin deciphering what is inscribed within them, noting that they are both a synthesis of wisdom and maps of cosmogony, as well as powerful talismans or amulets brimming with energy.

Here we present the magic squares assigned to the various planets, including numbers and letters from the sacred alphabet. As we have said, the three-column prototype is attributed to Saturn, the four-column to Jupiter, the five-column to Mars, the six-column to the Sun, the seven-column to Venus, the eight-column to Mercury and the nine-column to the Moon, in perfect alignment with the correspondences between the celestial bodies and *the sephiroth* of the Kabbalistic Tree and their respective numerations.

Although the placement of the numbers in each square appears chaotic at first glance, on the contrary these figures are arranged in such a way as to astonishingly reflect the harmony of the universe and the magical-theurgical nature of these symbolic structures, which is evident in the fact that the sum of the numbers in all the horizontal, vertical and diagonal rows is always identical. In the case of the Square of Jupiter, or Square of Four, comprising sixteen squares, an even greater perfection is observed, since the four central numbers, the four in the corners, and those opposite each other in pairs at the centre of the horizontal and

verticals, also add up to 34. It is recommended that you practise calculating the numerical value of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet appearing in each square and compare that value with the number assigned to that square. This exercise of substituting the letters for their numerical equivalents, using the Square of Saturn as a model, can be repeated in the various planetary magic squares given below.

Readers are reminded that the Hebrew alphabet is read from right to left, and that values represented by more than one digit should be read in the same way.

We recall here that the Pythagoreans swore not only by the Sacred *Tetraktys* but also by the Square of Four.

SATURN: Square of base 15; the sum of the numbers in the cells is 45:

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

ד	ט	ג
ג	ה	ו
ח	ז	י

JUPITER: Square with base 34; the sum of the columns is 136:

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

ד	יך	יה	ז
ט	ו	ו	יב
ה	ז	י	ח
יך	ב	ג	יג

MARS: Base number 65; sum of cell numbers 325:

11	24	7	20	3
4	12	25	8	16
17	5	13	21	9
10	18	1	14	22
23	6	19	2	15

ז	כד	ו	ב	א
ד	יב	כה	ח	יז
יז	ה	יג	טז	ט
י	יה	ז	כז	כב
כג	ב	יט	ג	יד

SUN: Square of base 111. The total of the columns is 666:

6	32	3	34	35	1
7	11	27	28	8	30
19	14	16	15	23	24
18	20	22	21	17	13
25	29	10	9	26	12
36	5	33	4	2	31

ו	לכ	ג	לד	לה	א
ז	יא	כו	כה	ח	ז
יט	יד	יז	יה	כג	כד
יח	ב	כז	כז	ז	יג
כד	כט	י	ט	כו	יב
לז	ה	לג	ד	ג	לא

VENUS: Base number 175. Total sum 1225:

22	47	16	41	10	35	4
5	23	48	17	42	11	29
30	6	24	49	18	36	12
13	31	7	25	43	19	37
38	14	32	1	26	44	20
21	39	8	33	2	27	45
46	15	40	9	34	3	28

ד	ל	ה	י	מ	א	י	ז	מ	ז
כ	ט	ז	י	ח	ב	ג	ה	ה	ה
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו	ו

MERCURY: Base 260. The total is 2080:

8	58	59	5	4	62	63	1
49	15	14	52	53	11	10	56
41	23	22	44	45	19	18	48
32	34	35	29	28	38	39	25
40	26	27	37	36	30	31	33
17	47	46	20	21	43	42	24
9	55	54	12	13	51	50	16
64	2	3	61	60	6	7	57

א	ס	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח
נ	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	יא	יב
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו

MOON: Based on the number 369. Total sum 3321:

37	78	29	70	21	62	13	54	5
6	38	79	30	71	22	63	14	46
47	7	39	80	31	72	23	55	15
16	48	8	40	81	32	64	24	56
57	17	49	9	41	73	33	65	25
26	58	18	50	1	42	74	34	66
67	27	59	10	51	2	43	75	35
36	68	19	60	11	52	3	44	76
77	28	69	20	61	12	53	4	45

ה	ד	ג	ב	א	ז	ח	ט	י
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו
י	ז	י	ח	ב	ז	ו	ו	ו

61 OUR PROGRAMME:

Our Programme has a circular didactic structure and therefore, once the first sequences of this Introduction to Sacred Science have been followed and a connection has been made with its particular rhythm, it can be reviewed and reread in a different order.

However, as a method of knowledge, we are interested in the comparison and interrelation of all traditional forms as modes of expression of the same reality that manifests itself throughout History and across the entire expanse of Geography. From the confrontation and

linking of traditional symbols, sparks and energies emerge that help us to understand many of the points that are the subject of our studies.

Taoism and the Hermetic Tradition – as well as both being revealed by a Primordial and Trans-historical Tradition – share a common feature that brings them into alignment: the fact that they have not developed into religious or exoteric forms, as has been the case with Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or ‘quasi’-religious forms such as certain branches of Buddhism and Hinduism, etc. Both place the emphasis on Alchemy as individual realisation, which affords them a broad framework, and do not emphasise the emotional path as practically the only means of access to the spiritual. It has been said that this latter path has become almost pure sentimentality in the present day, and does not lead to Knowledge.



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Dante begins the first canto of his *Divine Comedy* with these words: “Midway upon the journey of our life I found myself in a dark wood, for I had strayed from the straight path. Ah! How painful it would be for me to describe how wild, rugged and dense that wood was, the memory of which renews my fear, a fear so sad that death is not so much.” To Dante’s eyes, mundane and profane existence presents an aspect analogous to that of a dense, tangled forest in which survival would be a struggle, which evokes the Platonic conception of earthly life as an exile from the heavenly realm. Indeed, visually, the verticality of the trees and trunks, the horizontality of the branches, and the dense presence of plants, flowers and leaves, form a fabric analogous to that of everyday life and its twists and turns, within whose complicated thicket there are, nevertheless, clearings and fissures through which light penetrates.

Although it should be noted that the jungle has certain characteristics that differ from those of the forest, in the sense that both the flora is highly dangerous and the fauna is entirely distinct; the humidity of the jungle is equally dangerous in itself, since any wound that may occur on the human body – where larvae often lodge and reproduce – does not heal immediately and must be constantly tended to due to the risk of infection and other tropical germs of countless species; especially for those unaccustomed to it. All this, without underestimating the fearsome dangers of a living forest, unaccustomed to intruders.

Esoterically, the forest, the jungle, or wild and unspoilt nature, as places that are particularly primitive and uncultivated, offer a symbolic backdrop to our own internal and external nature, higher and lower, whether in its primordial sense of exuberant fertility, or in its crude, uncultivated and heterogeneous aspect (the *infra-conscious*), in both cases a feminine, telluric setting.

In many villages and cultures, where the geographical landscape dictates it, the forest or jungle plays a very important and significant role as a place set aside for worship, initiations and contemplation. The erection of dolmens and funerary structures within forests, particularly in clearings and open spaces, is very common in archaic cultures. Many ancestral customs and rites, preserved in popular memory, continue to be repeated periodically in these places. Ancient myths and legends are rife with references to magical forests where the plots of their stories unfold and where, generally, non-human beings or entities dwell, whose relationship with heroes and men is symbolically linked to the alchemical and spiritual process itself. A classic of this genre is the tale of *Snow White*. Guarded by seven dwarves in a forest (*psyche*), she lies half-dead for having eaten the fruit cunningly offered to her by the sorceress, the very same fruit that Eve once ate in paradise; whilst she awaits her ‘awakening’ through the prince’s kiss (*Eros*).

Indeed, tradition portrays gnomes, sylphs, undines and salamanders as magical inhabitants of the forests, offering us a figurative description of our own spiritual and earthly powers.

These beings are alchemically linked to the four elements—earth, air, water and fire—whilst Snow White, in this example, would correspond to the fifth, the ether; each symbolising the specific consciousness and function of each element, consciousnesses that potentially dwell within our own microcosmic nature, revealing themselves as elemental impulses and tendencies.

The forest, or the jungle, as a natural temple and sacred space, offers us, within its immense wealth of nuances (the spring, the grotto, the mine, the mountain, etc.), inexhaustible themes for meditation. A whole cosmogony that speaks to us symbolically of the fauna, flora and topography of our own inner and invisible nature.

63

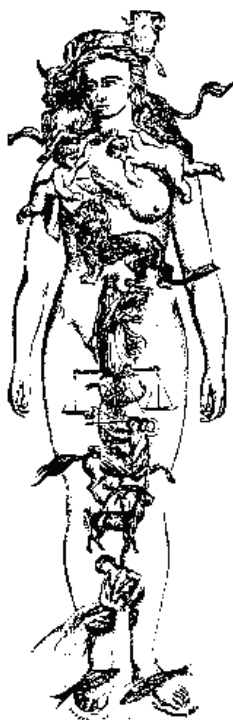
ASTROLOGY

We shall now outline, in a table, the relationships between the twelve zodiacal signs, the four elements and their qualities, and the human temperament attributed to them:

Sign	Element	Qualities	Temperament
Aries-Leo-Sagittarius	Fire	hot-dry	bilious
Taurus-Virgo-Capricorn	Earth	cold-dry	nervous
Gemini-Libra-Aquarius	Air	warm-moist	sanguine
Cancer-Scorpio-Pisces	Water	cold-moist	Lymphatic

Below are the relationships between the human body and the signs of the zodiac:

ARIES: the head and face
TAURUS: the neck and throat
GEMINI: shoulders, arms, hands
CANCER: lungs, chest, stomach
LEO: back, heart, liver
VIRGO: abdomen and intestines
LIBRA: kidneys and urinary tract
SCORPIO: genitals
SAGITTARIUS: thighs and buttocks
CAPRICORN: knees



AQUARIUS: legs

PISCES: feet

[Fig. 18](#)

64 MOMENTS OF UNCERTAINTY:

There are moments of uncertainty on the path of Knowledge or Initiation, and the aspirant suffers the torment of doubt and the anguish of feeling unable to face the wealth of wonders and good news that they glimpse. For such moments, we quote here an excerpt from the Corpus Hermeticum, Chapter XI:

“Having resolved in your mind that nothing is impossible for you, consider yourself immortal and capable of understanding everything—every art, every science, the nature of every living being. Ascend higher than any height, descend lower than any depth. Gather within yourself the sensations of all creation, of fire and water, of the dry and the wet, considering that you are at once everywhere, on the earth, in the sea, in the sky; imagine that you have not yet been born, that you are in your mother’s womb, that you are a teenager, an old man, that you are dead, that you are beyond death. If you encompass all these things at once in your mind—times, places, substances, qualities, quantities—you can comprehend God.”

Whilst the sacred and spiritual core is essentially identical – due to its timeless and metaphysical nature – across all traditional civilisations, there are nevertheless certain traits and particularities in each that distinguish them from one another. This is due to multiple causes (diversity of ethnic groups, habitats, climates, etc.), but perhaps the most marked and important difference is that some of these cultures belonged to nomadic peoples and others to sedentary ones. This first major difference arises at the very moment when humanity leaves its Primordial Centre and spreads across the entire surface of the planet. The nomads, destined for constant wandering as peoples devoted to pastoralism, developed a culture markedly different from that of the sedentary peoples, who were essentially farmers as they remained settled in a specific location. These two ways of life, with all the nuances they entail, had a powerful influence on the way each group approached life and the mystery of the sacred, and therefore on the very constitution and structure of their rites, symbols and cosmogonic myths. This is clearly exemplified in the arts and crafts.

The nomads, constantly on the move, nevertheless created an art based primarily on rhythm and phonetics, such as music, poetry and song—that is, arts that are expressed sequentially and are therefore closely linked to time and the sense of hearing. In the very grammar and language of these peoples, and their present-day descendants, one finds a multitude of expressions rich in movement and rhythm that are not found among sedentary peoples.

The latter, settled in space by contrast, produced a more purely geometric and plastic art based on proportion and measurement, such as architecture, painting, sculpture and writing (the nomads transmitted their traditions orally); that is to say, arts and sciences that unfold in space but are made to endure over time, and are directly related to the visual faculty. As the sedentary peoples were farmers, most plant symbolism stems from them, whilst almost all animal symbolism comes from the nomads. In sacrificial rites, for example, the former offered plant species to their deities, and the latter species from the animal kingdom. These connections with the two realms of nature, the plant and the animal, must have had a powerful influence on the mental structure of these peoples, and therefore on the symbols that shaped their culture throughout history. In the Bible, these two ways of life are represented respectively by Cain and Abel, whose struggle should be seen rather as a symbol of the specific differences that have existed for centuries between the sedentary and the nomadic peoples.

It is also significant to note that the dwellings of nomads, built with materials that were easy to transport, were circular in shape, and the circle is, as we know, the symbol that best expresses the idea of movement, as well as the sign of the celestial and of everything related to cycles and rhythms.

For their part, the sedentary peoples, using heavy materials such as stone

(although prior to this they used wood as a building material), tended rather to build in a square shape, that is, in accordance with the geometric figure that symbolises the earthly and stability par excellence better than any other. In this sense, it was the sedentary peoples who were the first to build cities, and with them the concept of civilisation (*civis* = city) as we know it today came into being. Because they created works designed to endure over time, we are able to gain an understanding of their conception and their metaphysics of the world, which is certainly not the case with the culture of the former, who, roaming freely through boundless space, had no need to fix anything in place, and to whom the idea of the future, as conceived by the sedentary peoples, was entirely alien.

Notwithstanding all that has been said so far, one should not perceive a radical antagonism between these two ways of life, which in truth never existed. Art and audiovisual symbolism are the heritage of any traditional society, whether nomadic or sedentary. It is, we repeat, the conditions of existence that cause one form of symbolism to develop more than another. On the other hand, there have always been ongoing contacts between the two peoples (for example through trade, and even through the sacred rite of war, which was also a form of communication) that facilitated and promoted the exchange of ideas, customs and traditions. This often represented a regenerative force that prevented, at least up to a certain historical period, excessive 'petrification' among the sedentary peoples due to their settled lifestyle, and excessive 'dissolution' among the nomads due to their constant coming and going.

Likewise, many nomadic peoples eventually settled permanently, which gave rise, in all forms of expression of their culture, to a synthesis between the arts of time and space, of rhythm, proportion and measure. And this assimilation of nomadism by sedentary life is a vital constant in the history of humanity, as well as being a necessity that obeys cyclical laws. Various peoples found their identity and historical destiny as they took shape and solidified, a fact that led to the spatialisation of their sacred centre, and thus a concentration of energies such that it gave rise to the flourishing of civilisations with a high degree of cultural development, as was the case with the Arab, Jewish, Roman, Aztec, Mayan, etc.

66

THE THREE GRACES

Hesiod says in his *Theogony* that to Zeus: "Eurynome, daughter of Oceanus, of seductive beauty, gave him the three Graces of fair cheeks: Aglaia, Euphrosyne and the enchanting Thalia. When they look, love springs from their eyes. How beautiful are the glances they cast from beneath their brows!"

Indeed, these three women have been identified as Beauty, Love and Pleasure. They spread joy far and wide and fill the hearts of men. They dwell on Olympus in the company of the Muses, with whom they often sing the most beautiful melodies, and they also accompany Apollo when he plays his lyre. They are usually depicted as three naked maidens joined at the shoulders; generally, two of them look in one direction, and the one in the middle, in the opposite direction. They have woven the veil of Harmony and are companions

of Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysus and Eros; we may invoke them all with confidence.



[Fig. 19](#)

In *De beneficiis*, Seneca asks: 'Why are there three Graces? Why are they sisters? Why do they hold hands?' and answers: 'Because of the threefold rhythm of generosity, which consists of giving, accepting and returning', adding: 'as *gratias agere* means "to give thanks" (to express gratitude); the three phases (of this operation) must be enclosed in a dance, as the Graces are; the order of benefits requires that they be given by hand but that they return to the giver". For the Christian Kabbalists of the Renaissance, this symbol expressed the celestial emanations that the gods send to earth, which produce an inspired vivification in beings, or conversion, from which they return them (or rise) to their place of origin. A triangular path is thus described, and one returns to the beginning. One must bear in mind here the identity between the figure of the triangle and the circle and their interchangeable use, although there is a superiority of the former over the latter ($3^2 = 9$).

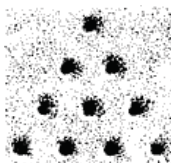
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ARITHMOSOPHY

The Pythagorean school regarded numbers as having gender, that is, as bearers of positive and negative energetic charges. Thus, odd numbers were active, expansive, masculine (*yang*, in Far Eastern terms), and associated with the heavens, whilst even numbers were passive, contractive, feminine (*yin*), and representative of the earth. The number one, a manifestation of metaphysical unity, was considered neither active nor passive, and corresponded sexually, in Platonic and alchemical terms, to the 'Primordial Androgyne'. This also applies to the tens, hundreds, thousands, etc.

Likewise, special interest was placed on so-called square and triangular numbers. The latter are formed by adding successive whole numbers starting from one, that is, by summing the consecutive numbers in the series; examples: $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$; $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 = 21$. Six and twenty-one are triangular numbers. The best known of these numbers is ten ($1 + 2 + 3 + 4$), perfectly represented in the form of a triangle in the famous *Tetraktys*. It is from this triangular arrangement that these numbers derive their name, just

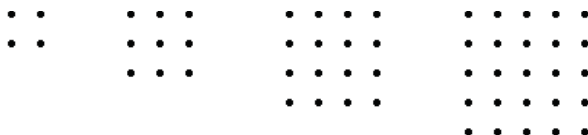
just as squares derive their name from their square arrangement and representation, since they are formed in a similar way to triangular numbers, starting with the unit, to which odd numbers are successively added; examples: $1 + 3 = 4$; $1 + 3 + 5 = 9$; $1 + 3 + 5 + 7 = 16$; $1 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 9 = 25$. Note that 4 is 2^2 , 9 is 3^2 , 16 is 4^2 and $25 = 5^2$; in other words, these are the 'squares' of those numbers.



The first ten triangular numbers are 3, 6, 10, 15, 21, 28, 36, 45 and 55.
The first ten squares: 4, 9, 16, 25, 36, 49, 64, 81, 100 and 121. It can be seen that the number 36 (equal, proportionally, to 360) is both a square and a triangular number.

Furthermore, it should be emphasised that the number five was of vital importance to the Pythagoreans, as the sum of two (even, passive and feminine) and three (odd, active and masculine), which is why it was called the 'Nuptial Number'. In the Hermetic Tradition, this number symbolises the microcosm and is represented geometrically by the pentagram.

It is interesting to note that the sum of an even number and an odd number is necessarily odd, whilst the product of multiplying an even number by an odd number is necessarily even. Furthermore, the sum of two numbers is necessarily even if both numbers are either both even or both odd. Conversely, the product of a multiplication, when it is odd, is the inevitable result of both factors being odd.



68

MAGIC

By Magic (without disregarding lesser, ineffective and perverse forms of this science) is understood here any ritual activity dedicated to drawing celestial energies into earthly reality, in accordance with the Kabbalistic doctrine of emanations which subordinates the elemental and corporeal world to the animic and astral world, and both to the strictly spiritual plane or, in other terminology, the intellectual or pneumatic plane.

For this reason, both cultic practices and incantations, ritual exercises, concentrations, studies and meditations, and

especially prayer, must be carried out with the spirit and intellect focused on the highest truths, on the supreme and unknowable God, beyond His own creation. This will ensure that these theurgical practices, which presuppose a cosmogonic and metaphysical knowledge, are effective and appropriate in proportion to the needs whose fulfilment is invoked.

On the other hand, this downward flow of energies and forces that is established must be entirely internal, that is to say, of exclusive interest to the individual practising them, in close connection with the benefit of Knowledge. Its characteristic must be the performance of a rite that is in harmony and rhythm with the universe, and these correspondences and analogies that one seeks to channel must be carried out with a total lack of interest in particular things; that is, with a high degree of 'emptying' and impersonality, so that the effusions from the highest realms may pour down upon the 'operator' or apprentice magician, who may thus gain access to the most subtle and hidden realities and to the highest spheres of the divine intellect, to such an extent that his own being is identified at all times and in all places with the most transparent emanations of the cosmos and perceives their unity and majesty in all things in a natural manner, for these truths are already consubstantial with his very being. In this kind of identification with the universe and that which lies beyond it, meditation on the *Sephirotic Tree of Life* plays an extraordinarily effective role, as a model of the universe and a vehicle and revelatory instrument (like the Tarot) for the energies mediating between the Highest Deity and beings and things manifested in an elemental or material form.

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The historical process of civilisations and cultures is in fact marked by the laws of cycles and rhythms, which, as we know, are the same as those governing all orders of universal manifestation. The simple fact of observing that a civilisation, like every being, is born, grows, declines and dies, is yet another, and quite vivid, example of how it follows and repeats, at its own level, the fourfold law into which every cycle is fragmented.

Drawing once again on analogies and symbolic correspondences, we can see that the cycles of civilisations are all encompassed within a greater cycle that spans the entire existence of humanity, which is divided into four periods or great ages, which the Hindus call a *Manvantara*, and which comprises the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, according to terms we have adopted from Greco-Roman antiquity. Following the same law of analogy, historical cycles are inexorably linked to the ebb and flow of cosmic time in its perpetual recurrence. In this sense, the astrological eras, in which a zodiacal sign dominates a particular historical period with its influence, confirm what we say.

Viewed as a whole, the history of humanity presents itself to us as an immense setting or stage (the theatre of the world) on which we can observe how entire peoples appear and disappear in obedience to an inexorable law. Similarly, we can view history as a great body (much like the cosmos itself) whose organs, and the countless cells that compose it, have the task of keeping it functioning. And just as the physical body is animated by a heart that breathes life into it, so too has the existence and very *raison d'être* of human societies been made possible by the fact that they have harboured within them the sacred repository of Knowledge and metaphysical doctrine, which is none other than Sacred Science.

Without the presence of symbols, rites and myths revealing the superhuman – and through which one may escape the cyclical recurrence of births and deaths marked by the all-encompassing God of Time – history would be meaningless and nothing but absurdity, for it would lack the most essential element, which is the Spirit; or it would become a mere collection of facts and dates compartmentalised into watertight boxes with no connection to one another, when in truth the opposite is the case: a poetry in which the soul of men and peoples is imprinted.

If the entire cosmos obeys a plan and an order that responds to divine designs, and in which everything plays a specific role and fulfils a specific destiny, it is obvious that civilisations and traditional cultures participated in the realisation and fulfilment of that plan, perpetuating it in each particular cycle with their own forms and characteristics, thus kindling and maintaining the inextinguishable fire of the Wisdom of the origins. In this sense, there is necessarily a subtle and invisible thread of continuity between all civilisations, and especially between those that have emerged in the same geographical area or continent.

When a civilisation, having exhausted its existential possibilities, is on the verge of perishing, another, younger civilisation with new elements comes to replace it, frequently giving rise to a kind of spiritual osmosis or transfer of sacred principles from one to the other.

70

JANUS

Janus-Bifrons, a Roman god of Babylonian-Assyrian origin, who also features in other very ancient traditions, gazes with his two faces in opposite directions across space and the calendar.

Spatially, he marks the North-South axis; temporally, the winter and summer solstices. He is thus a mediator between heaven and earth, in that heaven has been made to correspond to the North and, conversely, earth to the South. He is also the deity who opens the door of the year in winter in the Northern Hemisphere – the ascending movement of the Sun – and closes it at the summer solstice, when the Sun begins its descending course.

From an initiatory perspective, the summer solstice corresponds to the gate of men and constitutes the entrance to the lesser mysteries of antiquity, whilst the winter solstice is linked to the gate of the gods and the so-called greater mysteries. Astrologically, summer, associated with midday, corresponds to the sign of Cancer, whilst winter corresponds to that of Capricorn. Christian (Uranian) Christmas is celebrated on 24 December, and on 24 June the Witches' Night (Chthonic) is celebrated. On these same dates, Freemasonry commemorates the two St Johns: the one who opens the Gospel narrative and the one who receives the testamentary message.



[fig. 20](#)

The Romans attributed all manner of astonishing and heroic deeds to Janus, one of the greatest gods in their pantheon. Among other things, he is said to have ruled Rome during a golden age, when all was perfect. He was also the protector of the city, and in times of war the doors of his temple were left open so that he might come to the aid of its inhabitants. An intermediary deity whose two faces point to everything, a symbol of ambivalence—particularly of man—his attributes were the key and the boat, inherited by the Catholic pontiffs.

His central, invisible face is linked to non-time, or the primordial time of origins, and corresponds spatially and structurally to the axis of symmetry, and therefore to a path or way of union, of the permanent conjunction of opposites, which explains why he presided over the *Collegia fabrorum*, the guilds and initiations of Roman artists and craftsmen.

71 ON GRAMMAR, DIALECTIC AND RHETORIC:

We have previously touched upon the subject of the seven liberal arts (Nos. 57–58). There we stated that the Trivium (the triple path) comprises Grammar, Dialectic and Rhetoric—that is, the words, voices and names of things—and that in Christian esotericism these were respectively assimilated to the spheres of the Moon, Mercury and Venus. For Alfonso X, the Wise, the first of these sciences ‘cleanses the stammering tongue’ so that it may speak plainly; the second ‘polishes away the rust of falsehood’; the third ‘carves away the foolish work and composes it of beauties’; likewise, the first “gives man understanding”, the second “leads him to believe in things”, namely: in the truth; the third “admonishes and brings the others to complete the deeds they desire” or awaken; in the same way: “the first teaches us to speak rightly, the second to be useful and sharp-witted; the third to speak admonishingly and appropriately”.

With regard to grammar, Aristotle said that it was ‘writing down what is spoken’; in any case, this has little to do with what is understood by grammar today. And it is quite clear that it existed before its mere codification, just as it is obvious – to draw a parallel – that the law existed before Roman law. So-called modern science includes certain rigidities that must be dismantled; Spanish grammar, as we know it, originated in the 18th century and is a contemporary of Descartes and rationalism. This problem goes back a long way: Horace asserted that usage is the arbiter and master of languages, and rules an auxiliary device. This same criticism applies to logic, taken as a science, and its assimilation, by turns to dialectic and rhetoric, and one may reasonably suppose that this error of the classificatory mania stems from the depths of Greek philosophy, largely initiated by Aristotle himself, which has given rise to the ‘systems’ of the moderns (especially after the Age of Enlightenment) and which, unfortunately, are today identified with ‘philosophy’.

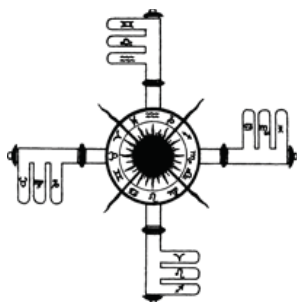
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KABBALAH

The Kabbalah attaches fundamental importance to the apparent contradiction between God’s infinite transcendence and his immanent presence on earth. In His transcendence, the Supreme Being cannot be understood or known; His immanence—His creation of this world and His dwelling within it—is explained by Kabbalah, as we have seen throughout this manual, through a series of successive emanations that constitute the cosmos and the *Sephirotic* Tree of Life, that is, the divine attributes forming the Universe.

But these emanations, the Kabbalah teaches, have in turn been brought about by the *Tsim Tsum*. To make room for creation, God withdraws and leaves a void, in which a small luminous point shines—the concentration of divine light that will make possible the first emanation, *Kether*, and from then on the permanent flow of creative and revelatory emanations. This is the theory (in the etymological sense of the term) of the Kabbalistic *Tsim Tsum*. A ‘contraction’ within the inner space of the deity, which, upon withdrawing, leaves a remnant of itself (*reshimu*), which, through expansion,

As we already know, there are three zodiacal signs assigned to each of the elements, namely: fire, earth, air and water. Thus, the signs of Aries, Leo and Sagittarius correspond to fire; Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn to earth; Gemini, Libra and Aquarius to air; and Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces to water, as can be seen in the beautiful engraving below.



[Fig. 21](#)

Some astrological and hermetic theories hold that the zodiacal signs corresponding to a particular element are in turn divided into three types of energy or energetic charges: positive, negative and neutral; thus, for example, of the three zodiacal signs associated with fire, Aries would be positive, Leo negative or passive, and Sagittarius neutral. Below is a table of the signs, their association with the element and their energy charge within that same element.

Aries	Fire	Active	Libra	Air	Active
Taurus	Earth	Passive	Scorpio	Water	Passive
Gemini	Air	Neutral	Sagittarius	Fire	Neutral
Cancer	Water	Active	Capricorn	Earth	Active
Leo	Fire	Passive	Aquarius	Air	Passive
Virgo	Earth	Neutral	Pisces	Water	Neutral

Among the earth signs, Taurus is passive, Capricorn active and Virgo neutral; among the air signs, Libra is active, Aquarius passive and Gemini neutral; and among the water signs, Cancer acts as active energy, Scorpio as passive and Pisces as neutral energy.

74 THE CONFUSION BETWEEN METAPHYSICS AND ASCETICISM:

Many people suffer from a misconception that needs to be clarified, which may be the root of many other evils, and which may even be an impediment to their fulfilment. This misconception concerns the tremendous limitation of understanding the sacred solely as holiness, and therefore as something unattainable, worthy only of those few exceptional chosen ones, called 'Saints' (whether from one tradition or another, particularly if they demonstrated this through phenomena, miracles or paranormal occurrences), with all the devout, pious, devout and superstitious baggage that such an idea entails. These saints or holy men – and all the better if they were ascetics – would be the true 'masters', and not the wise men or warriors, and even less so the artists or merchants, who are of course appreciated, and even respected, but who are accorded no more than a secondary – almost profane – status, due to the fact that, ultimately, the people we are referring to associate 'spirituality' exclusively with 'holiness', and even with chastity and worse things still, namely: with the 'religious' and the 'moral' rather than with the metaphysical.

It should be made clear that there are various paths to spiritual realisation, and the routes leading to it are diverse. Not only are the traditional forms different, but within each of them there are distinct paths of initiation. This manual provides numerous examples of this. What matters is the realisation of Knowledge and the attainment of Wisdom, which does not exclude the emotional realm, nor any other experience aimed at that end, nor is it opposed to the 'religious', and even less so to morality, provided that these concepts do not seek to encroach upon the realm of the metaphysical and attempt to reduce it, at best, to mere 'mysticism', and at worst, to a morality based on certain conventional rules of conduct that are officially judged to be 'good'.

Norms that would give their hypothetical approval to what is to be understood as sacred according to parameters they set, based on the sanctimoniousness derived from the error of pretending to know the sacred, when in reality it is supplanted by the religious and the moral and, through ignorance, is always identified with 'holiness' or 'asceticism', which are but some of the paths, if indeed they are, on the journey of Knowledge.

75 CYCLES AND RHYTHMS

We have repeatedly emphasised the need to perceive time not in a linear manner – which is the ordinary way – but in a circular, or cyclical, manner, which allows us to broaden our vision. Furthermore, we recommend symbolising it in the form of a spiral, or as a double helix, which enables us to perceive its movement from the centre to the periphery, and from there back to unity. Ancient traditions conceived the universe in this way: as the result of an 'explosion' (produced by a sound or word) of a tiny particle of energy that contained within itself all the latent possibilities of that universe. From that original event, the world expands to its very limits, reaching a point where finally 'time stands still' to embark on a journey in the opposite direction, contracting, in search once more of the central origin, from which it 'explodes' anew. Indeed, from the perspective of that

very centre, which is eternal, this dual movement is simultaneous and ever-present, and it is at this point that we must seek to situate ourselves when we meditate on the matter.

Birth and expansion until reaching the limit, and its return or contraction to the origin—also perceived as a death or new birth—is a natural law that governs not only the universe as a whole, but also any particular being or manifestation. The cell, the molecule, every entity of nature's varied kinds, humankind, civilisations, the Earth, the solar system, the galaxy, etc., are a unity in perpetual harmony and rhythm. Each, in its own dimension, experiences fourfold cycles that are clearly expressed in the phases of the day and the moon, the seasons of the year, the stages of human life, animals and plants, all the rhythms of nature and history, and, in broader terms, those of the cosmos in which the ancients were able to conceive – and calculate – the great ages.

Astronomical cycles, as we know, are vast; but within these cycles are embedded smaller ones, which in turn contain others, and so on, until we reach the smallest. We shall now look at two of these periods, which we shall take as a 'module' to introduce the subject of what tradition has called 'the four ages of humanity'.

76

ANGELO-LOGY I

It is through angelic mediation that the Absolute becomes visible to us. "No one has ever seen God," says the sacred text; but there is a face that God shows to man, and that is the Angel of the Face in whom the Supreme Divine Name rests.

Angels are the bearers of the Names of the Unnameable. They are God and yet at the same time they are knowable; they inhabit, or are, the boundary between the visible and the invisible, and that is why they are called messengers (in Hebrew, *Malakh*).

The angelic world is 'God in action'; God as an active agent. Divine creativity manifests itself through them, determining the diversification of beings who, without separating themselves from God, ensure the presence of the Divine on earth (*Shekhinah*). That is why their function is theophanic. And just as Geometry describes the 'order of the earth', the 'celestial order' is constituted by the angelic world and its invisible structure governed by *Metatron*.

Geometric proportions and new musical harmonies (balances and sets of meanings) are the first manifestations perceptible to the human being who comes into contact with their essential self: with their angel. An Angel is the essential reality of any being, that is, its 'being' at its highest level; and that is why one can speak of the angel of a landscape or of any creative work. 'Your Divine and personal Lord is your Angel through whom God speaks to you from mouth to ear'; it is also the proper name and the 'aroma', the personal 'melody'.

The Archangels, as archetypes, inhabit the *Beri'ah* world (or plane of Creation) in which the first chapter of Genesis unfolds.

The term ‘angel’, although generic, is applied to the spirits clothed in formal garb who inhabit the plane of *Yetsirah* (or World of Formations).

The four archangels usually mentioned (Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Uriel) arise from and are mobilised by the creative Word, to carry out the unfolding of the word into the four worlds that flow from the four letters of the name YHVV, and likewise stand guard over the four cardinal points or ‘four fields of the *Shekhinah*’.

77 THE UNANIMOUS TRADITION:

Throughout the Programme, the reader has often encountered the idea of a Universal and Unanimous Tradition, which, manifesting itself through cultures and civilisations, takes on different forms and shapes distinct individual histories; yet, despite this, and beyond the dissimilarity of its aspects and a literal, superficial reading of them, an essential identity is revealed. This is because that Universal and Unanimous Tradition, which presents itself as something prior and horizontal in history, is, from another perspective, something vertical and archetypal that has existed and will exist forever—that is, as something ahistorical. In this order of realities, Tradition will live on perpetually, for it is woven into the very fabric of life and is consubstantial with humankind, regardless of the various guises in which it expresses itself, according to the different coordinates and variables of time and place.

One of the clearest examples of this ‘coincidence’ is the macro-microcosm correlation, that is to say the inversion (exterior-interior) and indissoluble conjunction ever-present between man and the world, upheld by all traditions.

This perspective and conviction, which makes man a microcosm, a reflection of divine energies, is also manifested throughout his physical organism, the vessel and receptacle of cosmic emanations, which are potentially alive within his bodily space. However, it must be borne in mind that when the various traditional forms speak to us of these correspondences, they are not referring exclusively to the human body at its densest and most elemental level, but to the four planes and interpretations into which all existing beings and things are divided, of which the mere physical organism, its health and its musculature, is the most peripheral and superficial part and therefore almost an object of worship for the misguided contemporary mindset.

78

ARITHMOSOPHY

Traditional arithmetic attached great importance to ‘proportional’ numbers, that is, to those figures that characterised them, regardless—save in a secondary sense—of the addition of one or more zeros. Thus the numbers 26,000, 2,600, 260 and 26, the first of these being the ‘rounded’ figure corresponding to the precession of the equinoxes (see ‘Astrology’, [No. 43](#)), half of which is 13,000, that is, the number of thousands of years of the Great Chaldean and Greek Year. As for 260, this is the figure of the

Mesoamerican ritual calendar; regarding the number 26, we should note that this figure is the sum of the letters *Yod* = 10, *Heh* = 5, *Vav* = 6, and *Hé* = 5, components of the sacred Hebrew *Tetragrammaton* IHVH (the name of *Yahweh*, or *Yahveh*, equivalent to *Jehovah*), a name which, out of respect—that is, out of fear of God—cannot be pronounced, but only written, according to Kabbalistic tradition.

On the other hand, and still with reference to these ‘proportional’ numbers, we shall point out that multiplying by five is the same as dividing by two. E.g.: the number twenty-five thousand nine hundred and twenty (corresponding to the exact years of the equinoctial precession) divided by two gives twelve thousand nine hundred and sixty ($25,920 \div 2 = 12,960$); multiplied by five gives one hundred and twenty-nine thousand six hundred ($25,920 \times 5 = 129,600$). There is just one extra zero. Conversely, multiplying by two is the same as dividing by five: ($25,920 \times 2 = 51,840$); ($25,920 \div 5 = 5,184$). Here the difference is a zero removed from the numerical root figure.

We wish to give an example of numerical work, proceeding from the premise that numbers are understood to be sacred and therefore there is nothing arbitrary about them, nor about the operations performed on them, which sometimes produce astonishing results—results which the primitive or traditional mind perceives as magical, or imbued with a special energy for some reason. This is because, according to that mindset, everything in the universe is interconnected and bound by a series of relationships, sometimes invisible, so there is nothing ‘random’ in this world.

Example: the simplest practice to observe in relation to the above is, without doubt, a geometric verification, namely: that the radius of a circle always divides the circumference into six equal parts. Imagine what this verification means to the traditional mindset: it is carried out using a simple string with which the circumference is traced, the length of which is exactly contained six times within the drawn perimeter. Undoubtedly, this stems from a magical, or rather metaphysical, reality, and has a profound reason for being; it is not merely meaningless data. This fact is exceptional to the primitive mind, and this astonishing verification appears laden with meaning.

We can now perform some numerical exercises, merely to highlight certain curious or surprising aspects of numerical Kabbalah, arithmosophy or numerology: if we divide the aforementioned number twenty-five thousand nine hundred and twenty by two, we obtain twelve thousand nine hundred and sixty ($25,920 \div 2 = 12,960$). If we divide that same number by five, we get five thousand one hundred and eighty-four ($25,920 \div 5 = 5,184$). And if we add this number to one thousand two hundred and ninety-six (the proportional of twelve thousand nine hundred and sixty), we get six thousand four hundred and eighty ($5,184 + 1,296 = 6,480$). If we divide that result by five, lo and behold, we get—once again—one thousand two hundred and ninety-six ($6,480 \div 5 = 1,296$). But the curious thing about this example is that the number six thousand four hundred and eighty is proportional to sixty-four thousand eight hundred, which, according to Hindu tradition, is the number corresponding to the great cycle of a *Manvantara*, which is subdivided into four sub-cycles proportionally related to the four ages of humanity: the Golden Age lasts 25,920 years, that is, the figure for the precession of the equinoxes or the ‘year’ of the Earth; the second, or Silver Age, lasts 19,440 years; the third, the Bronze Age,

12,960; and the last, the Iron Age or *Kali Yuga*, 6,480 years. It is interesting to note that this numerical ratio corresponds to that of the Pythagorean *Tetraktys*: 4 + 3 + 2 + 1, which, incidentally, adds up to 10.

79

ASTROLOGY

In [No. 63](#), we outlined the correspondence between the zodiacal signs and the four elements, and at the same time the energetic charge that each possesses in relation to the other two signs with which it shares that element.

We now wish to add a table of medieval origin in which the zodiacal signs are associated with the characteristics of certain stones found throughout nature. We wish thus to highlight the traditional connection between Astrology and Alchemy, and to recall that metals and stones are the manifestation of the energies of the celestial bodies and stars upon the face of the earth, and, by analogy, share the same properties and characteristics.

Hot and dry	Aries stones	Taurus stones
Cold and dry	Hot	Gemini stones
and humid	Cold and	Cancer stones
humid	Hot and dry	Leo stones
Cold and dry	Hot	Virgo stones
and humid	Cold and	Libra stones
humid	Hot	Scorpio stones
Cold and dry	Hot	Sagittarius stones
and humid	Cold and	Capricorn stones
humid	Hot	Aquarius stones
Cold and dry	Hot	Pisces stones
and humid	Cold and	
humid	humid	

For example, the sign of Scorpio corresponds to thirty stones with cold-wet characteristics, each relating to a degree of that sign and to a specific star that holds power over it. Equally important is the planet ruling the sign—in this case, Mars—as the fundamental energetic characteristic of all the cold and wet stones associated with Scorpio.



[fig. 22](#)

80

MEMORANDUM

Discipline strengthens character and heralds spiritual fulfilment and realisation. Withdrawal from the world and the deepest solitude become necessary, even indispensable at certain moments, when silence is a true refuge and isolation a protective inner fortress. By then, one will have already realised the fallacy of regarding solitude as an agonising taboo, or as the absence of a 'happiness' as non-existent as it is coveted; rather, it is the precursor to an enchanted world of magical images, of shadows and lights from the memory of the universe, reflected upon the stage of consciousness. (Is all this something new, or was it simply here all along and we were unable to see it because we had a different and mistaken view of life?).

But as the apprentice discovers these wonders, he will observe that his environment will try to marginalise him, perhaps in direct proportion to his eagerness to share the true spiritual content of his new experiences, discoveries and knowledge with others indiscriminately. This is why silence—not merely as a discipline, but as an effective and practical rule of conduct—has always been recommended in Hermetic work. This clashes with the need to express the doctrine in the age in which we live, where it has become almost essential given the absence of voices raised to make known, disseminate and defend the sacred science, practically forgotten by modern man and unknown to the majority of our contemporaries.

We hope that you have been able to follow the development of the Teaching closely and that it has had its effect on each of you. We are also pleased that we have been able to reach a point together that constitutes a milestone in our goal. We intend to deepen and expand upon the themes that have been outlined and highlighted in order to achieve the fruits that this manual sets out to achieve. To this end, we must necessarily rely on the reader's active spiritual participation and their renewed thirst for knowledge, as well as their resolute will, their passion for what they do, and the balance and patience required for the effective carrying out of alchemical work.

Furthermore, it should be noted that sometimes neophytes, immersed in their profound labours of metaphysical, magical and spiritual realisation, forget how exiled they are on this earth, and may come to believe that others—that everyone—share in the reality of their beliefs, when this is obviously not the case; on the contrary, many of the things linked to the Tradition are viewed by the modern world with repulsive hatred, irrational repugnance, or Olympian contempt, so precisely inverted are the things between the sacred and the profane, between Knowledge and ignorance.

End of Module II

INTRODUCTION TO SACRED SCIENCE

Agartha Programme

MODULE III

1 ASTROLOGY

Just as we have seen the zodiac in its annual cycle, divided into twelve monthly signs (Module I, [26](#)), we can also view it in a daily cycle in which the zodiacal wheel makes an apparent full circuit as the Earth rotates on its own axis. Some astrologers believe that the twenty-four hours following a person's birth reflect . To make these observations, they divide the zodiacal wheel into twelve Houses and assign two hours to each of them. This will determine the individual's ascendant and descendant signs and various aspects of their personality. When calculating the Houses, one must take into account the latitude of the place of birth, the day of the year and the time of day. The Houses are not, like the signs, exactly 30°, but range from 17° to 60°.

Below are the names of the twelve Houses; but let us reiterate that what is fundamental is an understanding of the principles, from which the specific manifestations derive.

I. *Vita*: this is the house of birth, which indicates the individual's particular characteristics, tendencies, talents and potential.

II. *Lucrum*: refers to the material plane, possessions, wealth and acquisitions, as well as sustenance and the physical world.

III. *Frates*: the house of siblings, and also of education, instruction and adaptation to one's environment. It relates to short journeys.

IV. *Genitor*: this is the house of parents and of characteristics inherited from the family and social environment. It also refers to patriotism and inheritance.

V. *Filii*: this house is related to children, and generally to what the individual produces, creates and begets.

VI. *Valetudo*: the house of subjects, slaves and domestic animals; it is also the house of work, duties and obligations.

VII. *Uxor*: refers to marriage, affections and unions, as well as alliances and associations.

VIII. *Mors*: the house of death and great transformations. It is also the house of decay and putrefaction.

IX. *Peregrinationes*: the house of pilgrimages and great journeys; it is related to spirituality, philosophy, religion and mystery.

X. *Regnum, Honores*: relates to goals, honours and glory, as well as to profession, ambitions and rewards.

XI. *Amici benefacta*: the house of friends, benefactors and admirers.

XII. *Inimici*: in this house are seen hidden enemies, imprisonment, exile, as well as illnesses, weaknesses and ailments.

2

THE FOUR AGES

According to Hindu tradition, ‘from every pore of *Brahma* a universe springs forth at every moment’, and the life cycle of a universe is called a *Kalpa*, which is represented as a breath of that invisible Being. A *Kalpa* is in turn divided into fourteen *Manvantaras*, each of which is a complete human cycle of existence, or a ‘day’ of the earth, which is itself subdivided into four *yugas*, or sub-cycles, corresponding exactly to the four ages of the Greeks.

We can find in the mythologies of peoples the memory of a primordial time; a lost paradise – or Golden Age – in which man lived in perfect harmony with the cosmos and nature, in a ‘state of grace’ and the perennial presence of the Spirit. In that *illo tempore*, which the Hindus call *Satya Yuga*, men identified with the gods, and truth, like a mountain, was visible to all. It was from those mythical ancestors that humanity inherited true culture and the highest spiritual values. However, due to cyclical laws, that time was followed by other ages, each increasingly restricted, in which the pristine state of the origins was gradually lost, the gods fell, and truth had to hide within the cave, in the underworld, and reveal itself only to a select few.

The Golden Age, or *Satya Yuga*, was followed by the Silver Age, or *Trêtâ Yuga*; then came the Bronze Age, or *Dwâpara Yuga*; and finally the Iron Age, or *Kali Yuga*, which, according to traditional astrological data, is about to come to an end.

Let us now consider two cycles: one, the 25,920-year cycle referred to in Module II, 43: the precession of the equinoxes; the other, broader one, of 64,800 years (the duration assigned to *the Manvantara*), numerically related to the former, with which it maintains a 10:4 ratio, as can be seen in the following table, and one of its common divisors being is 2,160 years, the duration of a ‘zodiacal era’ (see the section cited and later in this Module, 71: ‘The Cycles I’). One way of viewing them is to divide them into four equal parts, in which case each of the phases of the first would be 6,480 years and those of the second 16,200. But another traditional way of subdividing these cycles, which gives us a different perspective on them, is that obtained by applying the Pythagorean law of the *Tetraktys* ($10 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4$), in which case the following numbers are assigned to each of the ages:

10 =	Cycle of:	25,920 years	64,800 years
4 +	<i>Satya Yuga</i>	= 10,368 +	25,920 +
3 +	<i>Treta Yuga</i>	= 7,776 +	19,440 +
2 +	<i>Dvapara Yuga</i>	= 5,184 +	12,960 +
1	<i>Kali Yuga</i>	= 2,592 =	6,480 =
		25,920	64,800

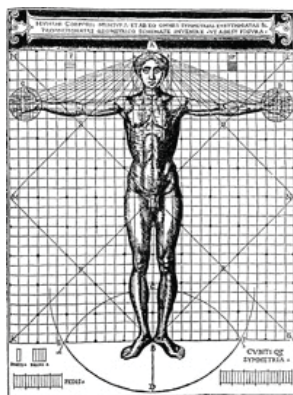
Hence, from the perspective of the first cycle, the beginning of *the Kali Yuga* can be seen as occurring very close to the 6th century BC (2,592 years ago), whilst from the perspective of the second cycle, that beginning would date back to

6,480 years before the end of the cycle. In any case, it is noteworthy that the data from tradition show us that both cycles are coming to an end, and that we find ourselves at a point of transition, a fact which in turn heralds the advent of a new Age.

3

ARITHMOSOPHY

Linear Measurements and Their Proportions. Civilisations of the Far East and pre-Columbian civilisations have adopted the number five as their mathematical model. The Pythagoreans did so with the number ten. This represents a perfect correspondence, since five corresponds to the number of fingers on one hand and ten to that of both hands. The hand, or both hands (and in some cases even the sum of the fingers and toes = 20), have formed the numerical model from which they derived all their macrocosmic and microcosmic knowledge, which is certainly no small matter, for with this model they built the extraordinary civilisations that amaze us today and managed to calculate the distances and revolutions of the stars, including the Earth's third, spinning-top-like movement, known as the precession of the equinoxes, which it completes every 25,920 years. This is due to the analogies they established between all things, which modern science and its instruments confirm; for it is obvious that countless generations of men – even if they lived for 900 and 700 years as the Bible states – could not have had a literal experience of this latter fact. We shall give just a brief example of the linear proportions relating to powers of ten (the two hands).



[Fig. 23](#)

If man is ten to the power of zero (10^0), we could say that his dwelling is 10^1 . Ten to the second power (10^2) would be the field a farmer tills and which surrounds his house. 10^3 would be comparable to the district in which he lives, whilst 10^4 would constitute his province and 10^5 his country. Ten to the sixth power (10^6) would be his continent and 10^7 the whole world. 10^8 would constitute the solar system and 10^9 the infinite Universe; in that case, what would ten to the power of ten be?

It should be noted that the decimal series is particularly suited to linear measurements, whilst the series based on six – or its half, three, and its double, twelve – and particularly nine (equal to 3^2 or $3 + 6$) – is related to circular measurements or modules, that is, those that have an obvious connection with the circumference (360°).

4 SOME BASIC POINTS TO NOTE

– All the sages and all the ancient and advanced civilisations have emphasised the symbol and the symbolic path as an esoteric and magical vehicle for realisation, enabling access to the most secret and hidden arcana of the cosmogonic mysteries—that is to say, of Man and the Universe.

– We must consider the distinction between the esoteric and the exoteric as two distinct – and opposing – interpretations of reality. The esoteric relates to the invisible, the hidden and the secret, such as the centre of the circle (or the axis of the wheel); and the exoteric to the peripheral, the superficial, the external and the circumference (which is realised by taking the point as the starting point) and likewise to the changing movement of the wheel.

– The smallest is the most powerful.

– As is often said, the Teaching comes when the student is ready to receive it. That is to say: when their need is absolutely urgent.

– One more thing:

At this stage of the Teaching, it may be that you still do not know or clearly understand what the content of this manual truly is. Do not, then, take it for granted – as is usually the case – but return to studying it by rereading everything it contains in depth and with the utmost slowness (slowing down time). This humility—or rather, this honesty with oneself—is far nobler and more productive than assuming what one does not yet know or hastily labelling that which one wishes to brush aside merely to get out of the way. These re-readings will bring you more than one surprise and offer you numerous perspectives which, at this moment, you may not have expected to encounter. We believe that the above suggestion, backed by our experience in running our Programme, is valid and that we are justified in making it.

5 THE TEACHER

We wish here to say a few words about certain misappropriations linked

the ‘master’ that are characteristic of the confusion in which we live, which stem from a downward-spiralling dialectic exemplified by the West and its global influence, as this profane way of thinking has infiltrated the entire globe. We are not referring exclusively to certain assessments made on the subject, involving mere personal power in any of its forms, nor to the “cinematic-television” portrayals of the subject. Nor to a form of “sublimation”, whether of the subjects taught or of those who impart them. In such cases, there is always a fear of a false perspective regarding authentic spirituality, which is supplanted by emotional attachments, or clouded by the gloom of an overly materialised ‘belief’. All these possibilities can be framed within a linear and narrow perspective, within a literal and – however much one might wish otherwise – rationalist view, if not a sentimental and undoubtedly dependent one. We are referring to the false notions about the ‘Superman Master’, he who possesses greater physical and psychic powers than other mortals, and to the taboo surrounding the ‘gifts’ and ‘asceticism’ of this figure, who is distinguished by his egos rather than by his Metaphysical Teachings directly connected to the Spirit. To make matters worse, as some of these symbolic ‘powers’ and ‘gifts’ are true for those who are passing their Initiation tests – though never viewed from a crudely materialistic perspective – much confusion arises which remains unresolved if we are unable to address it.

Strictly speaking, in the Hermetic Tradition and Alchemy, the Doctrine and Teaching that the student learns is one and the same, and this is the Knowledge of Cosmogony, namely: the interpenetration of other times, spaces, rhythms and states of consciousness distinct from the ordinary, which are realities as authentic – if not more so – as the conceptions drawn from the accumulation of vagaries and inefficiencies offered to us by contemporary society. In this tradition, those who introduce and initiate are not regarded as ‘masters’ in the sense of exercising a psychological function or institutional authority, or even serving as role models in certain customs and practices that the world may change time and again at will, in accordance with fashions that will perpetually remain within the relativity of forms. No great issue is therefore made of this notion of the ‘teacher’, because it is taught that Realisation is individual and that each person must achieve it for themselves, inevitably. The reader is therefore advised not to place upon others what they must truly work on within themselves.

We must remember that, according to Plato, his teacher Socrates identified his role with that of an obstetrician, which is to say that he did not regard his vocation as something idealised and authoritative as our contemporaries imagine it to be. The true Master is a celestial energy that manifests within us, since that possibility exists within our inner being. The authentic Master is divine; he is the inner Christ, as he was for the early Christians and as he is for all those who do not have a childish view of things. The difficulty in accepting the teachings of this Programme and putting them into practice lies in this very point: that is to say, the reader must do the work themselves, out in the open, in solitude, without the support provided by what is commonly understood as a teacher, or identification with a label or this or that ‘institution’ more or less accepted by society.

"... since the sacred homeland of our ancestors lies at the centre of the Earth, and the centre of the human body is the sanctuary of the heart, and the heart is the dwelling-place of the soul; for this reason, my son, the people of this land, who are in no other respect less gifted than others, are, exceptionally, more intelligent and wiser, because they were born and raised in the place of the heart". (Words of Isis to Horus). *Corpus Hermeticum*, *Stobaeus* XXIV, 13.

The importance of Egypt in the history of our tradition is fundamental, since *Kemi* (the name given to ancient Egypt, meaning 'black land', the origin of the word Alchemy) is the cradle of all Western culture and particularly of Hermeticism.

According to Plutarch, the Egyptians liken their land to a heart that also represents the heavens. This vision, which conceives the space inhabited by man as a reflection of the celestial and as a central and sacred region, is common to every civilisation stemming from the Primordial Tradition, as is the case with the Egyptian civilisation, which shares essential truths with other advanced cultures.

Thoth, the Egyptian god who would later take the name Hermes among the Greeks, is the one who teaches Isis the priestly art that this goddess will pass on to her son Horus. These mysteries are passed on to the hierophants, guardians and transmitters of a divine and esoteric Wisdom that is enshrined and revived in the symbols, myths and rites of that great culture, which, in other forms, would also be known to the Greeks and Romans and to the medieval and Renaissance West.

The dismemberment of Osiris – as is also the case with the Greek Dionysus Zagreus – at the hands of Seth, and the restoration of his body by Isis, gathering the scattered parts together, has been the symbolic model of Initiation (death and resurrection) in the West. Guided by Hermes and with the aid of Isis, the dead journey towards their true abode, on a path analogous to the initiatory journey. Isis in Egypt, like Demeter in Eleusis, is the one who institutes the initiations among men and teaches their rites.

The relationship between Egypt and Jewish culture is clear. Let us recall that Joseph, the son of Jacob, was sold by his brothers to Ishmaelite merchants who took him to Egypt, and thanks to his divinatory gifts he became viceroy, ruling like another pharaoh. There he later received his father and his eleven brothers (Genesis, XXXVII to L) and from them the twelve tribes of Israel were born on Egyptian soil, where they remained until the time of Moses, who, as is well known, was educated at the pharaonic court.

It is also interesting to note that Joseph and Mary, with the infant Jesus, fled to Egypt on the advice of an angel who appeared to them in a dream, to escape Herod's massacre, 'so that what the Lord had spoken through his prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Out of Egypt I called my son"' (Matthew 2:15). Some claim that Jesus returned to that country during his hidden life.

There is an undeniable parallel between the Egyptian gods and those of

Greek and Roman mythologies, which demonstrates a clear influence of the Egyptian worldview on the Greco-Roman one, a fact confirmed by the fact that several pre-Socratic thinkers, led by Pythagoras, received much of their education directly from Egyptian initiates, who are said to have passed on to him much of the mathematical, geometric, musical and astronomical knowledge that has nourished our culture to this day.

It is also noteworthy that it was in Alexandria, in the Nile Delta, where an astonishing gathering of sages from diverse traditions took place in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries AD, resulting in a synthesis of Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian gnosis, which from there passed into the medieval West, illuminating the entire history of Europe and the Near East.

Ancient Egypt lies at the origin of *the Kali-Yuga* and is undoubtedly the bridge linking this era with the previous ones. The similarities between this civilisation and the pre-Columbian American cultures (especially in architectural symbolism) have led many to believe that both originate from the lost Atlantis.

7 PERFECTION OR PERFECTIONISM?

“Why? Why does the infinite love of the Universe manifest itself in the conflict between its creatures? Why the upheaval of illusion? Why does an imperfect world exist where evil and injustice reign?”

Let us try to reflect: who is the one speaking, the one rambling in this way? Answer: a perfectionist, someone keen to change the course of events, the divine plan. And we might ask that person in turn: What would be the point of creating the best according to the standards of an illusory organisation based on the benefits of science and health? Who could ‘improve’ according to the standards set by an imaginary entity? In any case, why should one ‘improve’ and in what respect? And who would be capable of certifying those ‘improvements’, that state of mind, that ‘spiritual comfort’? Every man is mortal; sooner or later, it ends; his true journey is a return to the origins. The ego, today called the desire for ‘perfection’ in relation to certain treasures—which are not always sex or money, but rather constitute for each person what they imagine themselves to be or their aspirations in that regard—is something extremely dangerous; an obsession that can be deadly.

To educate others in error—be it in the form of hygienic psychology, legalistic morality, or a sanitised culture (when they are not thrown into a competition with no real goal)—is to invite chaos, even if it appears the opposite. It is to seek ‘the best’ whilst leaving the good behind.

Whilst perfection is good and desirable, perfectionism can sometimes be the very opposite of it. On the other hand, perfection is difficult to attain, whereas perfectionism is all too easy to achieve, to the point where it becomes mechanical, completely devoid of sensitivity. All perfection is, in some way, an image of Perfection and therefore an aspiration towards that which is unknown and longed for. Perfectionism is active and seeks to achieve results by

reap rewards. This attitude is rational, whereas the former is intuitive. In Christian terms, perfection aspires to the Will of the Father, whilst perfectionism tends towards the will of man. In those very terms it is stated: 'Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect', but it is quite clear that this Heavenly Father is not concerned with promoting his own perfection, engaging in demagoguery, or 'cultivating his spirit'. Of course, there is an identity between this Father and the Cosmos, for in no way is He outside his own expression. If the reader of this Introduction to Sacred Science strives for perfection, it is not out of a self-sufficient perfectionism that presumes to be self-sufficient, to impress others, or to invent fables. On the contrary, their studies and meditations aim at identification with the laws and understanding of the Cosmos, for in this way they will come to know the perfection of the Father.

8

THE WORK

In the third chapter of Genesis, it is recounted how Yahweh said to Eve: 'I will greatly increase the pains of your childbearing', and to Adam: 'Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you shall eat your bread.'

It is important to note that this occurs as a consequence of the serpent's temptation and the eating of the forbidden fruit—that is, as a punishment—immediately before they were expelled from Paradise. Elsewhere in this manual, the significance of the Fall in relation to the Ages and Cycles has been mentioned, as well as the symbolism of Paradise, linked to an 'Edenic state', where, incidentally, all effort was unnecessary—a state which we hope to recover. However, we are interested here in addressing the subject of work, and in particular in pointing out the entirely mistaken concept of it held by the society in which we live, which sometimes constitutes a real impediment to the Teaching proposed by this Introduction to Sacred Science.

We shall first refer to the primacy of contemplation over action, an idea present in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and generally in all traditions. In Christianity this is clear.

Matthew (VI, 26–29) recounts that Jesus said, in the famous Sermon on the Mount: 'Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than they? Which of you, by worrying, can add a single cubit to your stature? And why do you worry about clothing?

'Learn from the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of them.' The symbolic connection between Lazarus's two sisters, Martha and Mary (action and contemplation), is also well known, as is the Master's judgement as to which of the two has chosen the better part.

On the other hand, we can easily see that this preference for contemplation is entirely alien to the world in which we live, marked by ceaseless action, by a projection of desires which, by their very nature, can never be fulfilled, by a constant anxiety and dissatisfaction

that lead to ignorance and, inevitably, to violence and destruction. But what is truly alarming is that this action – whatever meaning it may have – is regarded as a good in itself; to such an extent that to question it or not to practise it is to be looked down upon, or condemned by that very environment, for the issue has become a moral question born of the association between work and goodness. However, we wish to clarify that we have nothing against work that would be truly sacred, and therefore genuinely dignifying, were it guided by Will and Free Will. What is criticised is the modern concept of work for work's sake, that is to say, without any metaphysical purpose, and its equating with an end rather than a means. Whilst this latter criticism could be applied to other areas of contemporary activity (art for art's sake, science for science's sake, the psychic and the emotional, simply for the sake of being psychic and emotional, etc., etc.), the modern concept of work – which, in social terms, reduces man to merely a factor of economic production, whether individual or collective – carries a highly destructive potential, insofar as its compulsory nature and necessity generate in the soul a series of moral disturbances and material impediments in a society as unjust as the one in which we live.

In a traditional or primitive society, 'work' is not such, for it does not imply the dissatisfaction of that which must be carried out only with suffering, against one's will, or under the pressure of an arbitrary and alienating burden for which no ultimate purpose is found, but merely subsistence in a meaningless world. On the contrary, in archaic societies, men carried out their work in a ritual manner and in accordance with their roles, which arose from their capabilities and made them better suited to those particular tasks; they then performed these duties with pleasure, in perfect harmony and interdependence with the other members of the social organism. It is paradoxical that certain school textbooks and even some university texts still speak of 'slavery' as a historically outdated stage, when a simple glance at the environment in which we live shows us that our contemporaries are not only slaves to work, and live as such, but also of the dire consequences of that senseless labour, beginning with the chains of the accumulation of wealth – individual and social – for wealth's sake, namely: once again, the substitution of a means for an end. We wish to recall here another passage from the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not store up treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy them and where thieves break in and steal. Store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys them and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Work is for man, not man for work. Life is for man; man is not a debtor or a slave to life. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).



[fig. 24](#)



[*Home Page*](#)



We have already discussed the three mother letters, the seven double letters and the twelve single letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Below we present three tables showing these letters with their position in the alphabet, their numerical value, and, in particular, a specific symbol to which they are symbolically linked.

The reader is reminded that Kabbalah constitutes a wellspring of interrelationships and associations of images that enable the faculty of intuitive and direct knowledge.

The three mother letters are:

POSITION	NAME	VALUE	SIGN
1	<i>Alef</i>	1	Man
13	<i>Mem</i>	40	The woman
21	<i>Shin</i>	300	The arrow

The seven doubles are:

PLACE	NAME	VALUE	SIGN
2	<i>Beth</i>	2	The mouth
3	<i>Guimel</i>	3	The grasping hand
4	<i>Daleth</i>	4	The breast
11	<i>Kaf</i>	20	The clenched hand
17	<i>Faith</i>	80	The mouth and the tongue
20	<i>Resh</i>	200	The man's head
22	<i>Tav</i>	400	The chest

The twelve simple letters are:

PLACE	NAME	VALUE	SIGN
5	<i>I have</i>	5	Breath
6	<i>Vau</i>	6	The eye and the ear
7	<i>Zayin</i>	7	The camel
8	<i>Heth</i>	8	A field
9	<i>Teth</i>	9	A roof
10	<i>Iod</i>	10	The index
12	<i>Lamed</i>	30	The Open Arm
14	<i>Nun</i>	50	A fruit
15	<i>Samekh</i>	60	A snake
16	<i>Ayin</i>	70	A rope
18	<i>Tsade</i>	90	A roof
19	<i>Qof</i>	100	The axe

Note: *In various Kabbalistic interpretations, these signs vary and take on different meanings by virtue of the different associations they lend themselves to, and fundamentally in terms of the plurality of meanings that the symbols possess, without one necessarily invalidating the other.*

10

THE SOUL

Numbers and letters together form a graphic code of theurgical origin, since in the earliest expressions of this kind the characters are ‘magical’ before subsequently becoming ideographic, that is to say, expressing their own conceptual meanings. The multiplication of these signs and their otherness make possible (for example, in the Pythagorean numerical scale) all combinations and therefore their indefinite discourse; that is to say, they symbolically establish cosmic totality through a ‘system’ in which nothing is excluded, save that which can never be expressed—the origin of all manifestation. This is the reality of the symbol, which reveals the order of creation, in which all beings are encompassed (and numbered as in identity documents, where a convention such as fingerprints is also used, which, in their combinatorial nature, cannot be repeated either—if the comparison holds). Pantacles (the ‘little whole’) likewise condense and crystallise, just as in alchemical and Hermetic symbolism (Boehme, Agrippa, etc.). It should be noted that this talismanic activity is found among all peoples. One need only highlight Mayan writing and Egyptian hieroglyphs. It is likewise alive today among ‘primitive’ peoples.

According to this, the human soul would also be a number that is individualised in a figure – or seal – where unity is always present, just as the deity is constantly and immanently implicit in the development of any genesis-related discourse.

But beyond this discourse, nothing enters or leaves, nor does anything exist in any form, including the individual or universal soul, which therefore goes nowhere. Therefore, as the soul is linked to manifestation, we must situate it on the intermediate plane between the Creator and his work. If this is the case, the soul must be conquered, that is, one must acquire a ‘body of light’, for that is the ‘plastic’ medium (so to speak) that leads us to the Being. This is naturally identified with arithmetic Unity, which is in turn the necessary step towards the conception of Non-Being – the *Ein Sof* of Kabbalah – and finally that of the Non-duality between Being and Non-Being, which is truly what the Hindus understand as Supreme Identity. In this latter tradition, as in many others, this conquest or ‘activation’ of the soul’s powers (the ‘polishing of the stone’ in Freemasonry) is a possibility that every being carries within themselves, and likewise a reality that pertains specifically to man, and hence the unanimous need for labours, trials and rites that bring about this Union with Being, ontology as a preliminary step or foundation of metaphysics, that is, the sacrifice of that Being (which, of course, is no longer a mere ego) on the altar of ‘the cloud of unknowing’. It is supposed that this is the final surrender and also the meaning of the individual soul, as a vehicle, symbol, or number, that is, as the signature of the Creator – Word or Logos – in the world; a vehicle of access to the Spirit, that is, in the dissolution into that which

underpins everything, but which, of course, does not exist in the same way as the objects perceived by the senses or constructed by the brain. It is also worth noting the great deal of confusion surrounding these concepts, which are generally unknown to the Abrahamic religions.

If the deepest Mystery—that is, the manifestation of the Unmanifest-Being within Creation, is compatible – and even contemporary – with the Unmanifest, so too does the soul, which, as a whole, is not individual, concentrate at a point where it is synthesised, constituting the Being, as the clearest symbol of Unity, from which everything is generated, even within the realm of supracosmic possibilities.

It is often forgotten that all things can be and not be at the same time. It sometimes depends on whether one adopts one viewpoint or another.

The conquest of the soul is to attain one's own Destiny, that is, to be what one has always been.

11

GREECE

At the point where Europe, Asia Minor and Africa (Egypt) meet, the origin of the Greek or Hellenic peoples is Indo-European, and through this and the traditional (Apollonian) current coming from the North, the Greek Tradition expresses one of the confluences of the Primordial and Atlantean Traditions. This union of traditions will be an origin, an East [articulated from the 7th to the 5th centuries] for a later time, which, through the Roman Empire and the successive returns to Antiquity that will occur throughout history, will bring the mysteries to the West on the basis of mythical thought. The ancient tradition, represented by Homer (*Iliad*, *Odyssey*) and Hesiod (*Theogony*, *Works and Days*), encompasses an archaic Theogony and Cosmogony, also expressed through the sacred geography of Ancient Greece, and in which the memory of the four Ages of Humanity is preserved, designated by the names of the metals that symbolically correspond to them: Gold, Silver, Bronze and Iron. To the traditional order or cosmos established by these, Apollo, god of light, of polar unity and therefore of harmony, was later added, with Delphi being the centre of all Greece, the *omphalos* (navel), the pillar of unity for the peoples who made it up, whilst Eleusis and other similar sanctuaries were its heart, as custodians and transmitters of the Mysteries, in which the sacred origins of theatre are also to be found, for they constituted the representation of the exploits of the gods and men in the fulfilment of that destiny modelled on the attainment of the fullness corresponding to their Supreme Identity. These are the mysteries of Dionysus-Bacchus, linked to the earlier Orphic mysteries, and subsequently translated into the epic of the soul of man and the world recreated in those of Eleusis; and they are likewise, expressed in another way, those of Number, which constituted the essence of Pythagorean thought, and which would be reproduced in Plato's Theory of Ideas.

Socrates, Plato's teacher and heir to the supraformal essence of knowledge, was the one who articulated this philosophy in the adaptation that took place, simultaneously across the globe, in the 6th century BC; his dialectic, however, was the art of the midwife, as he defined

his role. Greek thought, taken up by Rome and revived by the Hermeticists and Neoplatonists of the Renaissance—and also a transmitter of Egyptian thought thanks to Hermes—is one of the foundations of the West. Both today and in the past, to transcend its profane interpretation—as represented most recently in the history of the last four centuries—is to enter the realm of the sacred, regenerated by the Initiation that takes man back to the Golden Age. The Platonic vision was already unattainable in its own time, as Socrates' own death foreshadowed, and the ills of historical Greece—materialism, rationalism, false dialectics, and the pre-eminence accorded to quantity—are, like others, those of the end of a cycle, and those of a profane world whose scholarship does not extend beyond Aristotle, with whom ontology is reduced to a materialist perspective, and the identity of being and knowing is emphasised only in its analytical reflection, although it likewise corresponds to the ordering of a good part of the particular aspects, which is such when it does not progress to systematisation.

Its mythology, the stories of its gods and its heroes and heroines, have shaped the soul of the West and nourished the imagery of our culture, and all this even though 'aesthetics' has obscured the symbol and even the authentic values they embodied have been inverted.

12

ROME I

Rome appears on the stage of history when the peoples of Greek Hellas, who largely descended from the primordial Tradition (the cult they professed to the Hyperborean Apollo and the Olympian Zeus is an example of this), were in the throes of twilight decline. Already in the mythical origins of Rome we find the significant legacy of the Hellenic peoples, for, as Virgil recounts in *the Aeneid*, the Trojan prince Aeneas – a solar hero like Heracles – is chosen by Jupiter to found in the region of Latium (“where Saturn once held his sceptre...”) a colony from which Rome would later emerge. Furthermore, in the *Aeneid* itself (Book VI) it is recounted that from Aeneas would arise the lineage from which the greatest Roman statesmen and emperors would descend, amongst whom we might highlight Julius Caesar and his nephew Caesar Augustus.

Likewise, almost all the names of the Roman gods were Latinised versions of the Greek ones: Saturn for Cronus, Jupiter for Zeus, Mars for Ares, Mercury for Hermes, Venus for Aphrodite, Minerva for Athena, Bacchus for Dionysus, etc. The same influence is evident in the arts, literature and philosophy. In this regard, the influence of Plato and his successors on Cicero, Varro, Seneca, Ovid, Horace and the aforementioned Virgil, the ‘prince of Latin poets’, is well known, not to mention all those Roman or Romanised philosophers and theurgists such as Nigidius Figulus, Ario Didymus, Quintus Sextius, Cornelius Celsus and Apuleius (initiated into the mysteries of the Egyptian priests and well-versed in the Hermetic doctrines that emerged in Alexandria), were part of the Neoplatonic and Neopythagorean school, contributing to the spread of their thought to every corner of the Empire. Even some emperors, such as Julian, fully embraced Platonic ideas.



[fig. 25](#)

Despite all this, one should not think that Roman civilisation was a carbon copy of the Greek. What is certain is that from a certain point onwards, both formed a single culture, the Greco-Latin culture, which, far from disappearing, continued to thrive in the West right up to the very dawn of the modern era.

However, if we consider the Roman tradition itself, we see that it belongs to the great family tree of Indo-European civilisation, from which the Celtic, Hindu, Greek, Germanic and many other peoples also emerged, all of whom had a more or less direct link to the primordial tradition. That link is clearly evident in the historical origins of Rome through the existence of the seven law-giving kings, who are analogous to the seven *Rishis* of the Hindu tradition, mythical beings charged with preserving and transmitting Wisdom and Knowledge in each new cycle of humanity. And this is what the seven kings represent in relation to Rome: they transmit to it the guiding principles that will enable the development of its civilisation. This is the case with Numa, who established the priestly college and the first calendar, and it is significant that his name is syllabically reversed with respect to that of Manu, who in the Hindu tradition symbolises the primordial Ancestor and Lawgiver, as if indeed Numa's role in relation to Rome were identical to that of Manu with respect to humanity as a whole.

But the founder of Rome, the one who marked out the sacred boundaries of the city and from whom its name derives, is none other than Romulus, the first of the law-giving kings. He was able, through the spiritual strength derived from knowing himself to be the bearer of a destiny linked to the supra-historical and transcendent, to instil in the Italic peoples (including the Etruscans and the Sabines) the idea of the Empire under the protective banner of the eagle, the celestial and divine bird par excellence. In reality, the Empire corresponds to an ancient traditional conception dating back to the very origins of humanity, according to which it represents the expression of the celestial and uranic order upon the earth. In the highest traditional cultures, mention is made, under various names, of a mythical 'Middle Kingdom' where the Universal Monarch (the Hindu and Buddhist *Chakravartī*), the King of

Justice and Peace, the King of the World, who is none other than the Divine Word from whom emanates the Eternal Law governing the harmony and order of creation.

13

THE MUSES II

On the summit of Helicon, the sacred mountain north of Olympus, stood the altar of Zeus, and on its slopes were the springs that bestowed poetic inspiration upon those who drank from them (such as Hippocrene, which sprang from the rock when Pegasus kicked it, or Aganipe), from whose bluish waters (the colour of the ether) the Muses also drink when, weary, they renew their vigour after dancing in their meadows, where they sometimes reveal themselves to men; likewise, on that mountain stood the tomb of Orpheus, the statues of the principal gods, and the sacred grove dedicated to them, where they were celebrated annually alongside Cupid. On its slopes grow fragrant plants that have the power to deprive snakes of their venom; and on those slopes, as on those of Mount Pindus and Mount Parnassus, Pegasus is wont to graze. On this latter mountain spring the fountains of prophetic inspiration: the Castalian Spring, whose waters were used for purification at Delphi and were given there to the Pythia to drink, flows from between two peaks, one of them consecrated to Apollo and the Muses, and the other to Dionysus-Bacchus. Dante invokes both before beginning to sing of the ascent narrated in the third and final part of his *Divine Comedy*.

It is said that in their battles, these goddesses defeated in a duel the nine daughters of Pierius—human and mortal—who had challenged them in song, and from whom they stripped their names. It is also said that in a similar duel they stripped the Sirens of their wings and crowned themselves with their feathers, causing the Sirens to fall into the sea. It is important to note, however, that for Plato (in the Myth of Er) and the Neoplatonists (Proclus), each Siren is associated with one of the spheres, and her song with the rotation of that sphere, which she moves with her wings, whilst the Muses preside over each of them in the vertical ascent. According to the Platonists, we do not hear those notes because they sounded when we were born and we lack a silence capable of contrasting them; hence, however, the sacred silence revealed within the forest and linked by the Greeks to the god Pan. And just as sunlight is a symbol of the Intelligible Light, there is an inaudible sound that is the image of the Logos, of the creative Word, whose intervals or proportions find their echo in the human heart, conveying the teachings that only the Muses bestow, for the Cosmos is the Music revealed to man:

“To be educated in music consists simply in knowing how the whole universe is ordered and what divine plan has distributed all things: for this order, in which all particular things have been brought together into a single whole by an artistic intelligence, will produce, with divine music, a concert infinitely sweet and true” (Asclepius, 13).

14

MITRA

A deity of Indo-Iranian and Chaldean origin (associated with *Varuna*, the Sky, and sometimes paired with *Ahura-Mazda*, the saviour god, in his

struggle with *Ahriman*, the dark aspect of creation), Mithras was adopted by Rome as one of its principal guardian deities, to the extent that he was regarded as the 'protector and sustainer of the Empire'. It is worth noting that the period of its greatest splendour (between the 1st and 4th centuries) coincided with the flourishing of Alexandrian Hermetic, Gnostic and Neoplatonic doctrines, with which Mithraism undoubtedly had contact, benefiting from many of their ideas. Such connections also existed with early Christianity, as evidenced by the numerous parallels between the figures of Mithras and Christ, already noted by certain Church Fathers such as Justin and Tertullian.

Its main festival was celebrated on 25 December, the day of the winter solstice, thus coinciding with the birth of the 'invincible sun' victorious over darkness (*dies natalis Solis invicti Mitra*). According to legend, Mithras is born from the 'stone' (*petra genitrix*) on the banks of a river, holding in his hands the sword and the torch, symbols associated with Justice and purification through fire and the light of Intelligence. He is, therefore, an eminently solar deity (the Greeks even linked him to Apollo himself, and also to Hercules), which is clearly indicated by the very root '*mir*' constituting his name, meaning 'sun'. This is attested to by the Emperor Julian (initiated into the Mithraic mysteries by the Neoplatonic and Pythagorean philosopher Maximus of Ephesus) when he addresses Mithras in these terms: "This Sun which mankind has contemplated and honoured since time immemorial, and whose worship is the source of their happiness, is the living, animated, rational and beneficent image of the Intelligible Father". Another meaning of his name is "rain", but understood in the sense of life-giving "dew", a symbol of the descent of spiritual influences.

An ancient Iranian hymn states that Mithra is ever awake and watchful, observing all things with care. He answers the call of the weak, and his power is always used for the benefit of mankind. Mithras is, in fact, the friend and protector of mankind, the one who instils heroic virtues in them: courage, inner strength, loyalty, brotherhood; and as an intermediary deity between the upper and lower worlds, he is also (like Hermes) the guide who leads them on their ascent towards the source through the planetary spheres. In this regard, we note that among the Romans the mysteries of Mithras were divided into seven degrees, corresponding to the planetary scale, but arranged in the following order: Moon, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, Sun and Saturn. These degrees were named Raven (*Corax*), Hidden – or Bridegroom – (*Cryphius*), Soldier (*Miles*), Lion (*Leo*), Persian (*Perses*), Courier – or Companion – of the Sun (*Heliodromus*), and finally Father (*Pater*). The first three constituted a period of preparation, during which the adept had to die to his former condition, which is clearly expressed by the Raven, whose dark colour symbolises precisely the phase of *nigredo* or alchemical death. During this period, he was instructed by the 'strongest of forces' and by the 'incorruptible Recta', urging him to 'persist in the power of the soul in pure purity'. The mysteries culminated in the attainment of the degree of the Father, through which – as hierophant (*pater sacrorum*, *pater patrum*) and head of the Mithraic community – the Unconditioned Principle was reached, the abode of the Blessed, "where there is no longer a here or a there, but rather calm, illumination and solitude as in an infinite ocean".

The rites were celebrated in underground caverns and crypts, called *mithraea*, which consisted of two levels, an upper and a lower one, representing heaven and earth respectively. In these crypts were depicted the fundamental symbols of Hermetic cosmogony: the planetary circles, the zodiacal wheel, and the cycles of the elements, where fire appeared as the principal purifying agent. Above the altar stood the effigy of Mithras at the moment of slaying the primordial bull with his sword ('Mithras the Bull-Slayer'), whose blood, spilled upon the earth, fertilised it, from which sprang wheat and the 'bread of life', the food of immortality. As a manifestation of nature's generative power, this animal is also the symbol of lunar and telluric influences, which determine the existence of the underworld, and which in man are expressed through his anima or vital energy. It is this energy, in its 'raw' state, that Mithras 'tames' and 'sanctifies' when he rides the bull, channelling it towards a higher purpose, until it becomes the driving force or subtle fire that makes transmutation and regeneration possible.

15

JESUS

Jesus was born among the Jewish people, and his lineage traces back to the kings of Israel, to the house of David, from which he descends. His Hebrew name, with the addition of the Greek Christ, identifies him as the one sent by the Father for the Redemption and Salvation of humanity, who liked to call himself the "Son of Man", thus revealing his dual nature, divine and human, the archetype of man's dual composition, the vertical and axial symbol of heaven-earth communication, made in the image and likeness of his Creator.

Jesus is born in a humble place, hidden from view, and is visited and worshipped by three kings and wise men who, following the light of the star, have come to know him. He then grows in wisdom and goodness and, after overcoming various dangers from which his parents protect him, wishes to be baptised by his cousin John, the ascetic who lives in the desert, who baptises with water, whilst he will baptise with fire, with his sacrificial blood symbolised by wine. From then on, an initiatory story unfolds, which the Gospels record in detail, and in which the esoteric meaning takes precedence over everything else, to such an extent that were it not for this meaning, what is stated in them would be absurd, being contradictory and irrational, and therefore obscure and confusing. In the Gospels, the knowledge of the authentic tradition of Israel flourishes—that which was established by Moses the Egyptian and which the Saviour inherits and embodies in accordance with the passage of time and the cycles and rhythms of every process. Everything is in the Gospels if one knows how to read them. Their immense emotional depth and beauty transcend rational and material interpretations, presenting us with the tremendous and magnificent portrait of the God-Man and the paradoxical journey of his life, which will end at the heart of the cross, after having been triumphantly received in Jerusalem and having undergone trials and crossed the Jordan several times. There he finally surrenders his life and time and is definitively reborn into Eternal Life in communion with his Father, with whom he forms a single and unique substance clothed in a Body of Glory. Such is that historical and archetypal man, the living image of the inner, Universal and Eternal Christ, who said: 'I am the way, the truth and the life'; he also said: 'Seek and you shall find'.

In the West, the advent of Rome was necessary for this sacred conception of the Empire to become a historical reality, spreading the ideal of superior civilisation that it embodied and to which it was predestined from its legendary origins. From Asia Minor and the Near East to Hispania, from North Africa to the Germanic, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon lands, Rome established its culture and its unified vision of the world, and thanks to the *Pax Romana*, the peoples under its influence experienced an era of great splendour and cultural flourishing. And whilst this imposition was often achieved through the use of arms, it is because for Rome (as for many other traditional peoples) war had a meaning entirely different from that of today, starting with the fact that it was a rite or a sacred act. This transcendent conception of war would also explain why Rome respected the traditions and ancestral customs of the peoples it conquered.

In relation to this, an important fact to bear in mind is that before going into battle, the Romans invoked, through appropriate rites, the active presence of their gods, so that it might be these gods who subdued the respective gods of their enemies; that is to say, war took place first and foremost on the invisible and spiritual plane, for the conquest of a territory, city or country first entailed dominion over its gods, who then became part of the Roman pantheon, thereby contributing to the maintenance of the Empire's unity. The ancient Romans knew full well that to achieve this unity, it was not enough merely to invoke the warlike and combative energy of Mars; rather, above this must exist the unifying and benevolent energy of Jupiter, the father of the gods and celestial lawgiver of mankind, whose emblems are precisely the imperial eagle, the thunderbolt (axis), the crown and the throne.

The emperor embodied these energies in his role and person, which transformed him into a being endowed with supernatural powers and an intermediary between heaven and earth, assuming the responsibility of governing his people according to the attributes of divine Mercy and Justice. Hence the title of *Pontifex Maximus* which he held. For this very reason, when emperors lost that mediating role (the examples of Nero and Caligula are very illustrative in this regard), it can be said that Rome entered a period of decline, thus heralding the end of its civilisation.

We must also consider the important role played by Rome in the broader context of sacred history, in that it succeeded in building a bridge between the West and the East, thereby taking up the legacy left by Alexander the Great. A Roman deity, Janus (see Module II, [70](#)), also alluded to this link between the West and the East, that is, to the complementarity of opposites. Of the two faces that Janus possessed, one looked to the left (the West) and the other to the right (the East), his gaze encompassing the two ends of the world, as a horizontal projection of the single vertical axis.

Janus was also the god who presided over craft initiations, especially those taking place within the *collegia fabrorum*, or builders' guilds. These were of paramount importance in the development of Roman civilisation, which, as we have already noted, adopted much of Greek culture, particularly in the fields of philosophy and the arts, and amongst these, architecture in particular. Indeed, the origin of the *collegia fabrorum* dated back to the time of King Numa, whom legend held to be a disciple of Pythagoras, despite the anachronism, given that manuscripts of Pythagorean content were found in his tomb. In fact, these *collegia* derived from Pythagoreanism the sacred sciences of number and geometry, which they embodied in temples, basilicas and buildings of all kinds, and which constitute the legacy of a cosmogony (based on constructive symbolism) that remained alive in Western culture thanks to its transmission to medieval and Renaissance builders, from whom, together with the decisive contribution of the Hermetic Tradition, Freemasonry—which has survived to the present day—would derive.

17

ALEXANDRIA

When, in 332 BC, Alexander the Great arrived in Egypt on his conquering expedition towards the East, he founded, in the Nile Delta and after visiting the oracle of the god Amun (assimilated to Zeus-Jupiter) in the Siwa Oasis, the city that bears his name: Alexandria. This emerged as the last great centre of classical culture, which would determine its destiny as a bridge city, facilitating the transmission of ancient wisdom to the new historical era that would dawn in the West following the definitive demise of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, its famous lighthouse has remained in the memory as a symbol of what Alexandria represented for its time: a beacon of intellectual light that radiated its civilising force to all corners of the Mediterranean world. Hence, its influence was felt by those who, whilst not living in Alexandria, were nonetheless linked to it as the 'beacon' of their era, such as Seneca, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Moderatus of Cadiz, and many others.

Undoubtedly, the creation of the Library and the Museum (*Museion*: 'Temple of the Muses') contributed decisively to the cultural splendour of Alexandria; from their foundation in the 3rd century BC, had attracted scholars, philosophers, magicians and theurgists from all corners of the world, eventually giving rise to the Alexandrian School of Mathematics, where the scientific and philosophical thought of the Pythagorean-Platonic tradition was combined with ancient Egyptian and Chaldean knowledge. There, the liberal and cosmogonic arts such as arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy were taught, giving rise to such important works as Euclid's *Elements*, which have laid the foundations of Western geometry. That school was also home to the physicist Archimedes, the astronomers and geographers Apollonius of Pergamon (called by his contemporaries the 'great geometer'), Eratosthenes, Aristarchus of Samos, Hipparchus of Rhodes (who discovered the precession of the equinoxes for the West, of vital importance for understanding cyclical laws), Claudius Ptolemy (to whom we owe the *Almagest* or *Mathematical Composition*), Demetrius of Phalerum and Nicomachus of Gerasa, author of an *Introduction to Arithmetic* and a *Manual of Harmony* (an exposition of Pythagorean musical theory), which had such a profound influence

would exert on Boethius, and through him throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Alexandria shines with particular brilliance in the early centuries of our era, for it was there that the Hermetic Tradition had just taken shape, thanks to the synthesis of the teachings of the mythical Thoth-Hermes Trismegistus with Neoplatonism, which emerged in the 2nd century with Numenius of Apamea (Syria) and was introduced to Alexandria by Ammonius Saccas in the 3rd century (specifically in the year 232). In this formation, we must not overlook the significant presence of elements drawn from Eastern doctrines and from Jewish and Christian Gnosticism. We may say that from that moment on, Hermeticism and Neoplatonism would form the two fundamental pillars of Western esotericism, and no movement or individual who has upheld and transmitted the Sacred Science over the last two thousand years has been alien to the ideas of the God Hermes, of Pythagoras and Plato, reconciled in the 'Alexandrian crucible'. Among the many who embodied these ideas, we must highlight, in the 1st century, Philo of Alexandria (who synthesised Judaism and Neoplatonism, thereby anticipating many medieval Kabbalists) and Apollonius of Tyana (who travelled through the East and India, and was also the author of a life of Pythagoras); in the 2nd century, Theon of Smyrna, Maximus of Tyre, Apuleius (who wrote **The Metamorphoses**), the aforementioned Numenius of Apamea, and Plutarch of Chaeronea, author of **Isis and Osiris** and **Parallel Lives**; and in the 3rd century, we have the aforementioned Ammonius Saccas, founder of the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria.

This school included none other than Plotinus, Porphyry, Hermias and Iamblichus (who, in his *Mysteries of Egypt*, states that it was in the Hermetic texts that he discovered the liberation of the soul from all the bonds of fate), Aedesius of Cappadocia and Plutarch of Athens. They, and many others, spread the doctrine throughout the Greco-Roman world: Rome, Sicily, Pergamon, Ephesus, Sardis, to name the best known. At the Academy of Athens, and between the 4th and 5th centuries, the figures of the aforementioned Plutarch, Synesius and Proclus stand out, the latter having been initiated into the theurgical mysteries by Asclepigenia, daughter of the former. Proclus is the author of a vast body of work, notably his *Commentaries* on Plato's works and *Platonic Theology*, in the preface to which he states that this treatise is "a eulogy not only of Plato, but also of those who have succeeded him in the philosophical tradition". Proclus thus appears as the one who bears witness to that tradition, synthesising the thought of all those who transmitted it over time, and who so greatly influenced the early representatives of Christian esotericism, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Lactantius, Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor, all of whom were steeped in Platonic and Hermetic ideas.

But it is important to emphasise that the School of Alexandria, and those established under its influence, would serve as the model for those that emerged in Byzantium, the Middle Ages (Toledo, Chartres and Oxford in particular) and the Renaissance, beginning with the Platonic Academy of Florence, where, under the direction of Marsilio Ficino, the entire *Corpus Hermeticum*, Plato, Proclus, Iamblichus and practically all the Alexandrian philosophers. This was fundamental to ensuring that the 'golden chain' remained alive in Western culture, continuing to the present day.

As we mentioned in the previous section, it was in the Egyptian city of Alexandria that the Hermetic Tradition finally took shape as a body of doctrines. And it is no coincidence, but rather due to historical, geographical and symbolic reasons, that it was in Egypt, and nowhere else, that this tradition would begin to radiate its influence throughout the West. As Plutarch notes in his *Isis and Osiris*, in the time of the pharaohs this country was also known as *Kemi*, which means ‘black land’—as we know, from which derives, with the addition of the Arabic article *al-*, the word *Alchemy*, the Hermetic science containing the sacred mysteries of the Egyptian priests, which in reality formed an intellectual entity whose spiritual authority emanated directly from the god Thoth, the messenger of Knowledge, an essentially civilising deity (who bestows upon mankind writing alongside the sciences and arts of Cosmogony), who took the name *Hermes* among the Greeks and *Mercury* among the Romans. Likewise, there is another traditional account of Arabic origin that confirms what we are saying; this is the expression ‘The Tomb of *Hermes*’, which is how the largest of the pyramids of Egypt was formerly designated, an expression that may also be extended to the two remaining ones situated beside it. In this regard, that same traditional source asserts that within that pyramid lies the Sacred Science transmitted by *Hermes* (identified with the prophet *Idris* or *Enoch*) since antediluvian times, in clear reference to the Atlantean civilisation, tracing back through it to the Primordial Tradition itself. It is also stated that the aforementioned pyramid preserves this Science not in the form of documents or hieroglyphic inscriptions, but ‘fixed’ within its own external and internal structure, for it is in truth an authentic symbolic model of the Cosmos, which it reflects in all its proportions and measurements. Consequently, it is the knowledge of what that model expresses that ‘The Tomb of *Hermes*’ actually alludes to, an expression which also suggests the secret and veiled nature that such knowledge took on from a certain point in the course of human history.

For all these reasons, it should come as no surprise that this revival of the Art and Science of *Hermes*, which took place in the early centuries of our era, occurred precisely in Alexandria—that is, in the land of Egypt—and was significantly shaped by Greek influence, particularly through Platonic and Pythagorean philosophy, which in large part drew upon the Orphic mysteries. To this must be added the contributions from other traditional currents, such as Judaism, nascent Christianity, non-dualistic Gnosticism and the astral cosmology of the Chaldean priests, who arrived in Alexandria, alongside other Eastern sages (particularly Hindus and Buddhists), via the great routes charted several centuries earlier by Alexander the Great. But the Hermetic Tradition, in the form it took from then on and as it has come down to us today, is fundamentally of Greco-Egyptian origin, which enabled it to spread rapidly throughout all the countries where Greek—or rather Greco-Latin—culture had been established since ancient times: practically the entire Mediterranean basin, Asia Minor and the Near East. Hence the constant references to *Hermes* and Hermetic doctrine among philosophers, magicians and theurgists from the most diverse countries and regions, which gave rise to a

community of thought, linked to the immemorial ‘golden chain’, which, under the spiritual and intellectual influence of the Messenger of the Gods, would nourish and be present in all the esoteric and sapiential currents that shaped the cultural identity of the West.

All this wealth of wisdom and knowledge was poured out by the Alexandrian Hermetic masters through a series of books that have come down to us under the name of the *Hermetica*, including the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which in turn comprises writings such as the *Poimandres*, the *Asclepius* and the *Kore Kosmou*, belonging to the *Excerpts of Stobaeus*, describe the entirety of the Revelation of Hermes, whose ultimate aim is to ensure that, through the study and knowledge of Cosmogony—the genesis of the world and the human soul, that is, the Intermediate Plane—the adept gradually awakens within himself the *Nous* (the Universal Spirit), and thereby the possibility of contemplating the reality of that which lies beyond the cosmos, the One and Only, in whom the true Good resides. Within the *Hermetica*, we must also consider the *Chaldean Oracles*, by Julian the Theurgist, and of course all those books and treatises of an astrological, alchemical and magical nature that speak of the correspondences and analogies between man, the various kingdoms of nature (mineral, vegetable and animal) and the celestial world: the planets, the zodiac and the star constellations, all of which form a vision of the cosmos regarded as a whole, where the parts that make it up respond to similar stimuli, thus manifesting the Unity that binds them together and from which they proceed, for as the texts say, ‘knowledge (gnosis) is the culmination of science’.

We are referring, for example, to the *Book of Hermes Trismegistus*, *The Trance of Solomon*, *The Sacred Book of Hermes to Asclepius*, *The Book of the Virtues of Herbs*, the *Kyranides*, etc. Also worth noting is the *Hieroglyphica*, whose author, Horapollo (a name combining Horus and Apollo, the two solar deities of Egypt and Greece), already speaks to us of the serpent or dragon *Ouroboros*, an alchemical ideogram that was later regarded by medieval and Renaissance Hermeticists as one of the symbols of the Great Work. We should also note the figure of Bolos of Mendes, who lived in the 2nd century BC and is the author of *The Book of Sympathies* and *Physics and Mysticism*, in which he describes the correspondences between the science of nature and divine science. And of course we must not forget the alchemist Zosimus of Panopolis and two of his principal works: *Final Account* and *Alchemical Questions*, in which he wrote that ‘the race of philosophers stands above fate’, whilst evoking ‘the thrice-great Plato and the infinitely great Hermes’.

19 ALEXANDRIAN HERMETIC COSMOVISION

The universe was created by a primordial sound vibration emitted at the beginning, that is to say, right now (for revelation is contemporary with time), by the Word, Verbo or Logos *spermatikós*, which is also the Mediator through whom the Supreme Being, the Father, conceives the model of the world. This Mediator or Intermediary between the primordial Unity and the hylical (material) world is called the *Nous Demiurge* or Spirit of Universal Construction. In turn, the *Nous Demiurge* rules over the astral divinities that govern each of the planetary spheres, which

, together with the zodiacal deities, organise the Wheel of Destiny, upon which the existence of beings and things is projected. This is the plane on which the *Anima Mundi*, or second ‘Demiurge’ (Adam *Protoplastos*), acts directly; by combining the opposing and dual energies already implicit in these divinities, it generates the perpetual and harmonious flow of cosmic cycles and rhythms. Finally, these celestial energies descend to the *hylic* plane or *Corpus Mundi*, into which they breathe life and order through the respective qualities of the four elements in their varied combinations. Nature thus becomes a vessel in which the various levels of universal existence are reflected. And it is through the revelatory signs expressed within it (as if it were an oracle) that man can trace his way back to his origin, ascending the rungs of the Philosophical Ladder, for he preserves within himself the seed of the immortal soul. But this ascent is made possible through theurgic science, which places man in communication with the gods and angelic entities, who, through ritual and invocation, transmit their intelligence and wisdom to the heart of the adept.

This, in a nutshell, is the cosmogonic content of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which the student of our manual will already be familiar with due to its close links with the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.

20

THE MIDDLE AGES

The label of ‘dark age’ now attributed to the Middle Ages is further proof of the thick veil shrouding today’s excessively materialistic mindset, which, in its ignorance, confuses and inverts everything. However, for some years now, and from various fields of research, this historical period has been restored to its rightful place, its most notable characteristic being the splendour and the presence of the supernatural and the sacred in all expressions of its culture.

To understand the Middle Ages, as indeed any historical period, one must be able to visualise it within the broader cycle to which it belongs. The European Middle Ages correspond to the specific cycle of the Christian tradition, and represent a segment or part of that very cycle—exactly its middle—hence the name ‘Middle Ages’. With it, between the 8th and 14th centuries, the high point is reached: the culmination of the idea of a specifically Christian civilisation, which had nevertheless been developing over the course of the preceding centuries (which must by no means be overlooked), and specifically from the moment when, after the death of Christ, the apostles and their disciples began to spread the message throughout the West, reaching as far as England.

This was the case with Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who are said to have been the bearers of the Holy Grail, which was used at the Last Supper and subsequently contained the blood and water (the spirit and the soul) that flowed from Christ’s wound on the cross. The legendary journey of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to the British Isles is undoubtedly one of the most important keys to understanding the true spirit that animated medieval Christianity, for there was certainly an assimilation of the ancient Celtic tradition – and very particularly of its innermost (esoteric) and initiatory aspect, the knowledge of which was in

the possession of the Druid priests—with Christianity. The well-known and significant legend of *the Grail*, which circulated throughout the Middle Ages (and which recounts the heroic and initiatory deeds of King Arthur and the Twelve Knights of the Round Table), would not have been possible without the Celtic heritage.

Likewise, many other elements from other traditions converged in the Middle Ages. We have the significant contribution of Roman civilisation, particularly regarding social and legal organisation, architecture and art (Romanesque, for example), the establishment of builders' guilds, similar to the *collegia fabrorum*, and also the concept of the Empire and the Emperor. In the Christian Middle Ages, the latter held temporal power; that is to say, his role consisted fundamentally in making his Empire a reflection of the celestial order on earth, and in this regard we should recall that the creation of the Holy Roman Empire (initiated by Emperor Charlemagne, and with which the Middle Ages properly began) had precisely that objective.

In the purely doctrinal sphere that laid the foundations for the development of medieval philosophy, mention must be made, between the 4th and 5th centuries, of the so-called Church Fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Saint Augustine, Origen and Maximus the Confessor—all of whom were well versed in Hermetic, Platonic and Gnostic doctrines—and their successors Dionysius the Areopagite (*On the Divine Names*, *On the Celestial Hierarchy*) and John Scotus Eriugena. We should also recall Boethius, who was a disciple of the School of Athens in its final phase, and thus a recipient of Platonic and Pythagorean thought, which he incorporated into his works, notably *The Consolation of Philosophy*, *On Music* and *On Arithmetic*.

But the Middle Ages could not be fully understood if we did not also take into account the other two Abrahamic traditions: the Jewish and the Arab. As for the former, it is evident that Christianity, by virtue of its origins, derives directly from the Old Testament, and the term 'Judeo-Christianity' suited certain organisations of Christian esotericism perfectly, to whom the teachings of the Kabbalah were not unknown, the Kabbalah having also reached its zenith during this period, particularly in France and Spain. As for the Islamic tradition, its influence on the arts and sciences is well known, as is the importance it played in the dissemination of alchemical and hermetic texts. Likewise, the Arabs are largely responsible for the dissemination in Europe of ancient Greek philosophy, particularly Aristotle, who exerted such a profound influence on the Scholastics, whose leading figures were Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, who were also interested in Hermetic science. In this regard, it is worth noting the important role played by the Iberian Peninsula in the transmission of all this knowledge, facilitating, thanks to its geographical location, contact between Islamic civilisation and the West.

On the other hand, we have the exchanges that took place between Muslim and Christian initiates during the Crusades, a development that would foster doctrinal communication between East and West which would endure beyond the Middle Ages, extending into the Renaissance, after which the rationalist philosophies and sciences

that inspired the modern era, undoubtedly the true ‘dark age’.

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Coinciding with the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the 6th and 7th centuries saw a period of concealment of traditional thought, in contrast to the heyday of previous centuries, which, as we have noted, had its most significant centre of influence in Alexandria. This concealment also affected the Hermetic Tradition, which, following the disappearance of the schools of Alexandria and Athens, would become concentrated in certain cities of the Near East, and especially in Byzantium (Constantinople), at that time the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, by then fully Christianised. Indeed, Byzantium emerges as the most significant heir to the Hermetic and Neoplatonic legacy, and ultimately to classical culture, which experienced a new flowering there, enduring well into the Middle Ages. This heritage is evident, for example, in the work of the Byzantine scholar Michael Psellos (11th century), a great commentator on the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Chaldean Oracles*, as well as on Plato, Proclus, Dionysius the Areopagite, etc., and who would later exert a notable influence on the Renaissance tradition. Precisely, and since we have mentioned Proclus, we should note that his important work was transmitted to the Middle Ages through Dionysius the Areopagite and also via the *Liber de Causis* (*Book of Causes*), long attributed to Aristotle, a text which, as its name suggests, deals with the principles of things and beings, beginning with Metaphysical Unity, which is identified with the Good and the Pure or the Uncomposed.

Medieval Hermeticism experienced a powerful resurgence under the impetus of the nascent Islamic civilisation, which in less than a hundred years spread from China and India to the Iberian Peninsula. Indeed, there were numerous Arab adherents who translated Hermetic texts (on alchemy, astrology, magic, mathematics, medicine, and the natural sciences in general), enabling these works to be preserved and subsequently translated into Latin, thus allowing their dissemination throughout Western Europe, which at the time of Islam's expansion (7th–8th centuries) was undergoing the difficult transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

On the other hand, it is no mere coincidence, but rather something dependent on the divine designs that weave the invisible fabric of history, that simultaneously with the Arab penetration of the Iberian Peninsula (8th century), the political, cultural and religious unity of Christendom was taking shape under the temporal and spiritual authority of the Holy Roman Empire, established by Charlemagne, and with which the Middle Ages definitively began, as we have seen in the previous section. This unity would facilitate the effective arrival in Europe, via Muslim Spain (a country known as the 'Royal Gate of Alchemy' and the 'Solar Gate'), of the sacred art and science of Hermes. Above and beyond the differences that may have affected the relations between the exoteric traditions of the traditional civilisations, the esoteric and metaphysical perspective always prevailed, uniting them in their essence. Caliphate Córdoba and later Toledo are the cities where the true medieval renaissance took place, and where the three traditions of the book—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—were to coexist fruitfully for long periods of their history. But it is above all

through the Toledo school of translators that the Hermeticism accumulated and developed by the Arabs began to be translated into Latin. Scholars from all the countries of Christendom (for example, Michael Scot and Gerard of Cremona) gathered in the imperial city, the ‘melting pot of alchemists’.

Alongside the School of Toledo, we must highlight the enormous importance of the Schools of Chartres and Oxford (12th and 13th centuries) in the dissemination of Hermetic and Platonic ideas. The teaching at both schools was based on the seven Liberal Arts and Plato’s *Timaeus*. The former included the brothers Theodoric and Bernard of Chartres, William of Conques, John of Salisbury, Gilbert of Porée and Bernard Silvestre, all of whom continued the work of John Scotus Eriugena (9th century), an Irish monk who in turn inherited the Alexandrian Hermeticism and Christian Platonism of Dionysius the Areopagite, his most important work being *On the Division of Nature*. In the second, we find the aforementioned Michael Scot, alchemist and astrologer, Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, known as the ‘Doctor Mirabilis’ for the great synthesis he achieved of all the branches of Sacred Science. It should also be noted that in these two schools there was a development of the natural sciences and experimentation, taken as symbolic supports for understanding the unity of the Cosmos and its Supreme Principle.

Given their importance in the development of medieval Hermeticism, the translation of *the Book of Morieno* deserves special mention; it recounts the legend according to which Hermes Mercury, the ‘Father of Philosophers’, recovered the sacred sciences and arts after the Flood. *The Emerald Tablet* was also translated; this is a fundamental text of Greco-Egyptian alchemy attributed to Hermes Trismegistus himself, and whose twelve points constitute a concise summary of the entire teaching of the Great Work. No less important is the translation of the *Turba of the Philosophers*, which describes, in the form of alchemical dialogues, the events of an imaginary congress of Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Democritus, Parmenides, etc. Also the alchemical and astrological book *Picatrix*, a translation carried out during the reign of the Wise King Alfonso X, to whom we owe the compilation of the *Books of Astronomical Knowledge* and the *Lapidary*, which discuss the magical properties of the mineral world in relation to astral and planetary energies. The same applies to the *Book of Mercy*, by the famous Arab alchemist Geber. Centuries later, at the height of the Renaissance, Cornelius Agrippa, influenced by this author’s teachings, wrote in *On Occult Philosophy*: “No one can excel in the art of alchemy without knowing the principles within oneself; and the greater one’s self-knowledge, the greater the power of attraction acquired, and the more great and marvellous things will be achieved.” This is the foundation of natural and spiritual Alchemy, which the great Sufi metaphysician Ibn Arabi would develop in his work *The Alchemy of Perfect Happiness*, outlining the stages the initiate must traverse on their ‘journey’, descending first to the elemental planes before returning, in a vertical ascent, to ‘The Power of the Elixir’ of Divine Wisdom. In this ascent, the pilgrim’s soul traverses the planetary heavens, cloaking itself in the light of knowledge that dwells in each of them, finally arriving before the presence of the ‘Divine Throne’, the ‘unmoved mover’ or Supreme Archetype, into which it will be absorbed in complete identification.

In Christian mysticism, this description of the spiritual universe is represented iconographically by a series of concentric circles with the Earth at their centre, around which revolve the three remaining elements plus the ether, the seven planets, the zodiac, the firmament of fixed stars, and the Empyrean—the abode of pure and eternal fire—above which appears the figure of the Divinity. This worldview, rooted in Ptolemy’s astrology and Plato’s *Timaeus*, would have a significant influence on Dante, whose *Divine Comedy*, written at the end of the Middle Ages, is regarded as the great synthesis of the Christian-hermetic esotericism developed during that period, helping to ensure that this esotericism was not lost in later eras.

Likewise, *the Divine Comedy* was based in part on the teachings of Islamic Sufism, and especially on the works of the aforementioned Ibn Arabi. He was called by his disciples the ‘Son of Plato’ and the ‘Master par excellence’, having attained the rank of ‘red sulphur’, which is none other than the spiritual state that, in coded alchemical language, serves to designate one who has definitively attained Knowledge through the acquisition of the ‘Philosopher’s Stone’.

22

DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE

Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the influence of this author—a representative of Neoplatonic thought and authentic Christian spirituality—was extraordinary. He is said to have been a direct disciple of Saint Paul, which helped to disseminate his writings and avoid censure from the ‘official’ Church. His ‘negative theology’, in the tradition of Proclus and Plotinus, directly influenced the entire medieval period prior to St Thomas (spanning several centuries), in particular (to cite just one example) the School of Chartres, and likewise Meister Eckhart (and Tauler and Suso), Nicholas of Cusa and St John of the Cross, amongst so many other Western sages, theologians and theosophers. He wrote a treatise on *The Divine Names* and another text on *Mystical Theology*, as well as a book on Astronomy. Some of his epistles have also been preserved. We reproduce here two of his letters addressed to followers.

"To Dorotheus, Minister:

"Divine darkness is that inaccessible light in which, it is said, God dwells.¹ And whilst that is beyond grasping because of the exuberant radiance of its supernatural light, nevertheless, in it rests anyone who is worthy of knowing and seeing God, and for the very reason that they neither see nor know, this very person exists in Him who transcends all vision and knowledge, knowing only of Him who is beyond sensible and intelligible things, saying at the same time as the prophet: ‘Your knowledge, so lofty that I shall never be able to attain it’.²

"Thus it is said of the divine Paul that he knew God when he realised that He existed, transcending all knowledge and understanding; likewise, he says that His ways are inscrutable and His judgements,³ his gifts are ineffable and his peace surpasses all understanding,⁴ for he discovered the One who is wholly transcendent, and knew, in a

way that surpasses all understanding, that He who is the author of all things is also superior to all of them.”

¹ 1 Tim., 6:16.

² Psalm 139 (Vulgate, 138), 6.

³ Romans, XI, 33.

⁴ Philippians, IV, 7

"To Sosipater, Priest:

"Do not consider yourself victorious, venerable Sosipater, for attacking that cult or opinion which does not seem legitimate to you, for if you argue rightly against them, you will not thereby demonstrate the positive value of your assertions; it may be that, both for yourself and for others, the truth—which is at once hidden and true—will escape you in favour of appearances.

"For it is not enough that an object is neither red nor shiny for it to be white; nor, if someone is not a horse, does that necessarily make them a man. And so, if you are willing to listen to me, this is what you must do: stop speaking against your adversaries, and let everything you say serve to establish the truth in such a way that the arguments levelled against you hold no water."

23

HERALDIC SYMBOLISM

Heraldry represents yet another expression of the traditional symbolism of the West. Strictly speaking, it emerged with the establishment of the medieval orders of chivalry, so everything associated with it is directly linked to the warrior caste and the nobility in general. It was not for nothing that it was called the ‘heroic science’ or the ‘noble science’, although it is also true that there existed an ecclesiastical heraldic art and that of the guilds of craftsmen, the latter being very widespread during the Renaissance. The rich and complex heraldic symbolism would be little more than a relic if it did not in fact contain an esoteric and fundamentally sacred meaning, which is precisely what gives it all its significance and importance, and above all what makes it fully relevant and alive today. Undoubtedly, the central and most important element of heraldry is the blazon or coat of arms. Etymologically, the term ‘blazon’ derives from the German verb ‘blasen’, meaning ‘to blow’, thereby revealing the presence of a spiritual and divine inspiration in its creation. In this sense, before becoming a written and figurative art, the blazon was proclaimed by the herald on the battlefield and at tournaments, using music as well; in other words, it was conveyed through word and sound. And everything we have already discussed in this Agartha Programme regarding the assimilation and complementarity between auditory and oral symbolism and geometric and visual symbolism applies in this particular case. Firstly, the heraldic shield embodies the art of the motto and the emblem. The motto is a maxim, a cryptic phrase that constitutes the soul of what appears on the shield, whilst the emblem is the figure or the body.

In general, the entire natural world, animals (including

(such as the dragon and the griffin), flowers and plants, stones, metals, planets and stars all contribute to the visual and symbolic elements of the coat of arms. A common motif in this context is the castle or any other fortress; in an initiatory sense, these are symbols of the regenerated soul, of the city, enclosure or inner palace closed off from profane influences. In reality, the art of the coat of arms, its spiritual technique, consisted of establishing a system of correspondences and analogies between the visible and the invisible, the natural and the supernatural; it was thus a truly hermetic science and art, and consequently linked to the idea that 'as above, so below'. It must not be forgotten that, for the traditional and archaic mindset, the whole of nature is a hierophany, that is, a manifestation of the sacred. In this sense, the various natural species depicted in the coat of arms express their corresponding spiritual archetypes, and to a lesser extent the different psychological tendencies associated with them. And in all this, man acts as an intermediary, since it is to his own inner universe that the entire heraldic code refers. For example, if the eagle is an eminently celestial animal, the posture in which it is generally depicted (with outstretched wings that sometimes span the entire shield as if containing it) serves only to symbolise the flight of the spirit towards the higher realms. Likewise, the gallant and fierce demeanour of the lion, a terrestrial animal, evokes and instils the inner courage essential for combating the dark and chaotic powers of the unconscious. And the griffin (half eagle and half lion) represents an intermediate state in the process leading from the terrestrial to the celestial. The coat of arms must also be regarded as an instrument not only for defending against physical enemies, but, more importantly, as a protective framework against subtle, lower influences.

In any case, the acquisition of a coat of arms was originally directly linked to the spiritual evolution of the person seeking it, which undoubtedly excluded any fictitious or opportunistic privilege. Likewise, the esoteric meaning of the symbols, figures and colours revealed the spiritual level attained by its bearer; and this extended to the heraldic shield of a guild, city, kingdom or nation. In this sense, to understand the true essence and spiritual character of a city or region, there is nothing better than to examine the symbols present in its coats of arms. One can then understand the importance of these, insofar as they were both receivers and transmitters of powerful ideas and authentic *mandalic* images, some of them containing highly advanced metaphysical knowledge.



[fig. 26](#)

24

ARCHAEOLOGY

It is common to find archaeological museums in almost all large and medium-sized cities around the world, housing artefacts and works of art from antiquity. Although the origins of archaeology date back to Renaissance Italy, traces of it can be found in certain classical authors, such as the historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who gave the title '*Archaeological*' to one of his works; however, it was not until the 19th century that archaeology became an officially recognised science. Moreover, it was during that century that almost all the sciences dedicated to the study of the past of humankind and the Earth emerged; we witnessed the birth of anthropology or ethnology, palaeontology, the history of religions, geology, and so on. One might perhaps ask why there was this sudden interest in the past, the bygone, the ancient, and we would reply that this was only possible because, in the 19th century, and particularly in the West, virtually every trace of Tradition had been lost, at least in a visible and external sense, so it was perfectly logical that man should begin to scrutinise the fragments of his historical past in order to reconstruct what the lives of his ancestors had been like, since his own life was sinking into an increasingly barren mediocrity. It is also the case that the 19th century saw the definitive consolidation of materialist positivism and rationalism, which had been incubating for some time, a development that was bound to have a decisive influence on the mindset of the era. It can also be said that these sciences were the result of that vision excessively focused on the external world, which, incidentally, is the one that still prevails among most mainstream archaeologists, who project it onto the very objects of their study. They are determined to see in their findings nothing more than more or less interesting and curious remains that must be classified (and pigeonholed) according to parameters they themselves have established for the sake of their own research convenience.



[fig. 27](#)

Another equally mistaken consequence, a product of this positivist mindset, is the failure to recognise the qualitative differences that exist between people and civilisations of different historical eras and periods, as if time were passing uniformly and were homogeneous. Thus, according to this criterion, the mindset of modern man, completely alien to any intuition or sacred and transcendent sentiment, would be identical to that of man in traditional societies, who, on the contrary, considered that all acts of his daily existence were imbued with sacredness. If archaeology, through analysis and excavation work, seeks to reconstruct the life of ancient societies, such research should not be divorced from a rigorous understanding of sacred history and geography—that is, of qualitative time and space—nor should it be oblivious to the relationships that exist between the diverse cultural and spiritual modes and behaviours of the people who made up those very societies.

Visiting an archaeological museum is, in a way, to rediscover a sense of timelessness. All the pieces, numbered and catalogued, stand there as if resisting time, refusing to cease to exist for good. Free from any prejudice, we shall realise all that humankind, inspired by the metaphysical principles that shaped their civilisation, is capable of creating, of making, of building—in short, of shaping in stone or any other material or substance—reflecting the beauty of their inner world. For those columns and arches, those sculptures, paintings, ceramics, bas-reliefs and mosaics are symbols and gestures that the ritual of craftsmanship has patiently fashioned and fixed: suddenly, the whole of human culture is represented there. An archaeological museum is truly a discourse in which the ancient is expressed (this is precisely the etymological meaning of archaeology), a term that should not be confused with the old and the obsolete; rather, it relates to all that is enduring and reflects universal ideas or archetypes. In this sense, the ancient is perfectly contemporary. And an archaeological museum can be an

for meditation (let us note that the word ‘museum’ derives from ‘Musa’) if we approach it not through the eyes of a ‘specialist’, but as if it were a poetic evocation where we are likely to find a forgotten part or aspect of ourselves.

25

ALFONSO X THE WISE I

For historical and geographical reasons, Toledo is the centre of the Iberian Peninsula. It is also so for symbolic and metaphysical reasons, and Tradition points, on the one hand, to the antiquity of this city, which dates back to the origin of time—namely, mythical time—and, on the other, to its connection with Atlantis, also present in the TL roots of its name. In this work, we wish to refer to Alfonso X the Wise, the true focal point of Spanish history (which he, moreover, compiled), as the most important monarch of Castile, the kingdom that gave Spain its unity, its language, and even, later on, its era of global hegemony, including the conquest of the Americas.

In the history of medieval Spain, the eminent figure of the Castilian king (1221–1284) stands out; he was himself the son of another great king, Ferdinand III the Saint. Alfonso X was undoubtedly known as ‘the Wise’ due to his vast knowledge across various disciplines and fields of learning. He himself wrote that for a king to be such, he must be the foremost of men in knowledge and wisdom, for only thus does he become the reflection on earth of the Supreme Intelligence. Furthermore, Alfonso X, by virtue of his dual status as king and sage, embodied in his person the synthesis of temporal and spiritual power, which, as we know, constitute the principal qualities of every true Emperor. This was possibly the reason (apart from dynastic and inheritance issues, which we shall not go into) why, for much of his reign, he sought the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. He believed himself to be a descendant of the imperial lineage stretching from Alexander the Great, through the Roman emperors, to his uncle Frederick II. Moreover, for Alfonso X, this lineage had celestial origins, as it had been established by Jupiter himself, whom he saw as a Greco-Roman foreshadowing of Christ. If he did not succeed, it was due to the disputes and political interests that at times clouded the ties between the monarchy and the papacy.

It is certain that subsequent events in European history would have taken a different course had Alfonso X been enthroned as *Rex Romanorum*. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the wise king’s fruitful work from exerting a notable influence in the fields of philosophy, the arts and the sciences of his time, and, more importantly, from building a bridge between the traditional cultures of the East and the West.

Thanks to the Toledo School of Translators (sponsored by his father Ferdinand, who modelled it on those established centuries earlier by the Umayyad caliphs of Córdoba), the richness of Islamic civilisation and culture (and through these, Greek philosophy) became known in Christian Europe. This school, the most important of its time, was attended in equal measure by Arab, Jewish and Christian scholars and sages, reflecting the spirit of coexistence that characterised, for long periods of the

the Hispanic Middle Ages, the three traditions of the Abrahamic faith. Books and treatises on astronomy, alchemy, music, medicine, geometry, agriculture and other arts and sciences—whether Hermetic, Hebrew or Arabic—were translated into Latin and the various Romance and vernacular languages spoken in Europe. Likewise, the Castilian language, into which many of these works were also translated, underwent an enormous enrichment thanks above all to the Arabic influence, becoming, moreover, the vehicle of a culture.



[fig. 28](#)

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The Gospel parable of the tares (Matthew XIII, 24–30 and 36–43), amongst other spiritual meanings, also illustrates the duality implicit in the initiatory process, at least up to a certain stage of it.

In alchemical iconography, the image of a farmer scattering seeds in his field, already prepared for ploughing, is frequently depicted; he is accompanied by an angel (the superhuman principle or the human Self) who seems to whisper celestial words into his ear. The field is our soul, and the grain of wheat is the seed of Teaching and Knowledge; for our inner well-being, it is necessary that this seed bear fruit and become powerful.

But within us there also exists the evil sower, who, furtively and sheltered by the shadows of night and ignorance, attempts to destroy the work begun by sowing weeds, leading us astray from the path that reason and higher intuition tell us we must follow. This evil sower is the ‘ego’, the lower soul, whose nourishment and sustenance are the fruits of ‘this world’.

However, the parable itself explains that we must not rush to cut down the newly sprouted weeds, for there is a danger of cutting down the wheat shoots as well. At the beginning, and whilst they are developing, we must let them grow together.

For the divine economy, which manifests itself as cosmic order, good and evil—or rather, mercy and severity—constitute a fundamental and indispensable duality, thereby hinting at the idea of unity or the reconciling balance of opposites in intelligible Love and Beauty. To begin with, we must not dismiss the negative aspect within each of us, for its presence offers us the contrast of shadow and inverted reflection.

Taken to the psychological level, the idea that the weeds should not be cut until they have grown means that the manifestation of all the lower tendencies we carry within is necessary, since concealing them could imply, on the one hand, ignorance of a part of our being, and on the other – given that in one way or another these tendencies exist – it is likely that in the end, if they are not expressed outwardly, they will end up undermining the best of ourselves.

But it is important not to forget that this must be done under the protection of Doctrine and Tradition, which act as a protective (sacred) framework. Only in this way can the inferior be channelled, purified and transmuted (by the subtle fire) into a superior element, which in the parable is exemplified by the golden ear of wheat, a fruit that symbolises the state of initiatory and spiritual regeneration.



[fig. 29](#)

27

GEOMETRY

The entire universe is a dance whose meaning can only be found in the invisible patterns it forms. Geometry deals with the study of these harmonic patterns and orders which, far from being static, are reflections of generative ideas. The East developed these patterns, which radiate from a centre and are called *mandalas* in Sanskrit, as aids to meditation.

The Divine Comedy, written at the beginning of the 14th century, presents a journey through the patterns of destiny in accordance with medieval Christian conceptions. Hell, Purgatory and Heaven are conceived as immense *mandalas*.

Let us recall that the study of geometry was recommended by Plato as a true path of initiation, since it is nothing other than the visible manifestation of invisible harmonies that can be perceived as sensations in a physiological space, as emotions in a psychological space, or as geometric forms in an abstract space. The nature of the relationship determines the being that is conceived, and that is why being and knowing are comparable.

Only consciousness is capable of perceiving the transparency between insubstantial geometric forms and the changing, transitory forms of this world. The architecture of existence is determined by an invisible, immaterial world, composed of form and therefore of geometry.

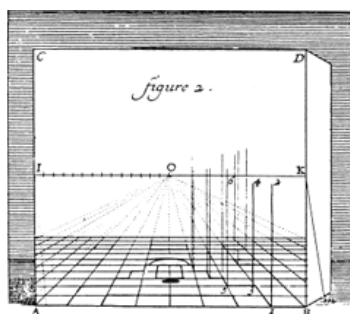
Indeed, as all Traditional Wisdom attests, there is a deeply rooted unity that underlies the seemingly chaotic manifold diversities of this world.

This order pre-exists; it manifests itself in simple proportional relationships, creating patterns which, in their harmony, reflect the whole and give tangible form to an intangible order. In the manifested world, unity is reflected as polarity, since it can only be conceived in terms of 'more of something' and 'less of something'. However, polarity refers to opposites but with no indication yet that anything arises from them. Proportion is what arises from these shared boundaries: it is a relationship and, in turn, a boundary that opens the door to the unlimited.

By harmony we mean an orderly and pleasing union of diversities; indeed, the origin of the word ‘harmony’ tells us this: from the Greek *armos*, meaning ‘to join’.

The myriad beings arise from the union of complementary opposites, and material appearance is nothing more than the interweaving of energies and polarities in varying proportions and harmonies, which produce the variety of its qualities.

The Book of Changes, or *I Ching*, is based on the recognition that the ever-changing diversities of existence have an underlying unity of order, in which everything is related to everything else. The foundation of this order is the unity of the dark (*Yin*) and light (*Yang*) principles, which, when combined in every possible way, symbolise the different basic situations of life.



[fig. 30](#)

28

ALFONSO X THE WISE II

It was precisely during the reign of Alfonso X that Kabbalah experienced its golden age, with the writing of the *Zohar* and other sacred texts of the Jewish tradition. Let us say that without the universal vision of historical events possessed by Alfonso X, the West would have entered a process of decline far more pronounced and rapid than that experienced between the 14th and 17th centuries, a decline which finds its clearest expression in our own time. Nor would the resurgence of hermetic doctrines during the Renaissance have been possible with the intensity with which it occurred. For example, the astronomical and astrological systems developed at that time drew their sources from the Alfonsine translations.

One of the works in which Alfonso X was most directly involved, apart from the *General History*, was the *Setenario*, which covers various cosmological, theological, historical and legal subjects, as well as certain dogmas and sacraments specific to the Christian tradition. But Alfonso the Wise also stood out as a poet who sang of the soul of the World, its beauty and harmony, which he saw embodied in the figure of the Virgin Mother. Alfonso X considered himself a humble troubadour of the Virgin, and his *Cantigas de Santa María* recount some of the miracles interceded by Our Lady, including several that occurred to the king himself. However,

it should be noted that the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Ages did not have the character of simple-minded piety that it later acquired, and whilst exoterically her spiritual influence maintained a bond between popular devotion and the sacred, esoterically she was regarded as the 'Queen of the World', and therefore the spiritual mother of the initiates. The *Cantigas* of Alfonso the Wise were not tinged with a vague mysticism; indeed, when set to music, they frequently became veritable hymns offered to Venus Urania, the goddess of Wisdom, Love and Beauty, three celestial virtues which this great king undoubtedly wished to be the cornerstones of his extensive and significant cultural legacy, which remains important to us today.



[fig. 31](#)

29 TRADITION AND THE MESSAGE

Tradition is transmitted horizontally and has enriched various civilisations and individuals. But this has been made possible by the constant vertical renewal of the Universal Tradition, which reveals itself in new forms (in accordance with a concert of forces that intertwine harmoniously and whose orchestration includes the personal circumstances of the individual or individuals who embody and transmit it), thus regenerating the Primordial Tradition, which ensures the continuity of the chain of union throughout history and the ever-present possibility of initiation, spiritual realisation and metanoia. Moreover, this urgency to convey to their fellow human beings this Message felt by those in whom the doctrine and the symbol have come to life is particularly acute in the present times, where the end of a cycle compels a redoubling of energies in vertical realisation, as well as in horizontal dissemination.

30 MEDIEVAL HERMETICISM II

In the West, the 12th century saw the expansion of monastic and chivalric orders, among which the Knights Templar stand out, as they were the ones who preserved virtually the entirety of traditional doctrine and knowledge. It is no surprise, then, that it was largely clergymen, abbots, men of the church and knights who, on their pilgrimages, spread Hermeticism throughout Europe. But the tradition of Hermes, with its magical and theurgical mysteries, instilled in the spirit of the

medieval man a love of nature unknown in the West since Greco-Roman antiquity; a love that was also inspired by the influence exerted at that time by Solomon's 'Song of Songs'. The sacred dimension of Nature, so to speak, is 'rediscovered'—its transcendent beauty, conceived as a hierophany where the divine and supernatural become present within the very bosom of 'matter'. Nature, in short, is visualised as a Woman who is both Virgin—*Natura Naturans*—and Mother—*Natura Naturata*—, who, upon receiving the seeds of the Spirit into her substance, procreates and gives life (and thereby devours and kills) to the innumerable forms that manifest the unity of the cosmos, thus full of symbolic meaning. For all these reasons, the human body, the microcosm, is dignified and restored to its analogical function of reflecting, in each of its parts, the totality of the macrocosm, thereby following the Hermetic maxim that 'as above, so below...'.

Always bearing in mind this immanence of the divine in Nature, the works of Alain de Lille, Hildegard of Bingen, Bernard of Clairvaux, Honorius of Autostodunum, and so many others, abound in symbolic correspondences between man and the cosmos, being custodians of the Platonic tradition updated by Scotus Eriugena. Bones, nails, hair and the senses are related to stones, trees, plants and herbs, animals... In the head, round like the starry firmament, reside intelligence and the luminous *mind*, likened to the sky of fixed stars surrounding the zodiac, whose perpetual rotation is driven by the divine breath. The chest, and more specifically the heart, harbours the higher emotions and feelings linked to the gods and angelic entities. The lower, instinctive part corresponds properly to the physical man and to the earth. All these correspondences reveal a cosmosophy that would serve as the basis for the subsequent development of Renaissance Occult Philosophy.

But first came the 13th century and the definitive establishment of Hermeticism, which, as we have already mentioned, permeated—in a subtle and invigorating way—virtually all intellectual, artisanal and esoteric circles. On the other hand, we must not forget the various currents of Hebrew Kabbalah, whose centre of influence lay in Spain and Provence. In this century, the philosophical, cosmological and theosophical conception of the Middle Ages found its fullest expression in the Gothic cathedral, which, like the Romanesque church, constituted a compendium of the material and spiritual universe. Carved in stone (perceived as living rather than inert matter) are depicted the various realms of elemental Nature, the intermediate world—including guardian monsters and fabulous beings—the human race portraying exemplary scenes and those from sacred history, the angelic and celestial hierarchies, and finally, presiding over this entire variegated ensemble that rises vertically towards the sky, the figure of the divinity in an attitude of immutable presence. This tiered vision, from bottom to top and from top to bottom, suggests the idea of an alchemical transmutation linked, moreover, to the description of a subtle geometry of the cosmos expressed by the cathedral itself, with its square (or rectangular) plan, columns, and circular dome crowned with the 'keystone'. The circle (heaven) encompassing the square (earth) or the square framing the circle symbolises the interpenetration of time and eternity in the unfolding of manifested existence. This

was part of the Pythagorean and Platonic teachings transmitted largely through Hermeticism to the building architects, who were none other than the masons and operative craftsmen. Indeed, alongside the builders' guilds, astrologers, magicians and master alchemists worked in perfect harmony; and that coexistence, enshrined in the cathedral, was a testament to the definitive synthesis that had been forged over centuries between Hermetic philosophy and Christian spirituality, from which arose so-called Christian Hermeticism and from which the Tarot code, as it has come down to us today, was also to emerge. Likewise, from that doctrinal convergence between both traditions arose various initiatory organisations which, such as the 'Brothers of the Free Spirit' and the 'Fideles de Amor' (the latter closely linked to the Order of the Temple), advocated an initiation based on the mysteries of love (also sung of by minstrels and troubadours) as a means of accessing Knowledge: woman as the personification of divine *Sophia* (Wisdom), who is revealed to man only when the soul or psyche has been alchemically reduced to 'prima materia'.

As for the abundant and beautiful literary output of the period, the hermetic influence is powerfully felt, as in the famous *Romance of the Rose*, with its epic and chivalric content, which describes the initiatory quest for the inner Temple (the Celestial Jerusalem), already foreshadowed in the architecture of Solomon's Temple. But Christian Hermeticism would also be present in men of the Church of the stature of Meister Eckhart, St Bonaventure, and the aforementioned St Albert the Great, Roger Bacon, Michael Scot, Robert Grosseteste, and even in popes such as John XXI and Sylvester II (the latter in the 11th century). Back on the Iberian Peninsula, we find the Catalan physician and alchemist Arnau de Vilanova, whose work **The Rosary of the Philosophers** highlights the correspondences between the passion, death and resurrection of Christ and the processes of the Great Work. Around the same time, also in Spain, the Jew Moses de León wrote the *Sefer Ha Zohar* or 'Book of Splendour', a fundamental work, alongside the *Sefer Ha Yetsirah*, of Kabbalah, which had a notable influence on the Mallorcan philosopher and theurgist Ramón Llull (or Raimundo Lulio), creator of an astrological-alchemical system, the '*ars combinatoria*', based on the combinations and permutations of various letters, names and divine attributes related to the primordial geometric figures of the triangle, the circle and the square, figures which symbolise each of the three worlds. This is a complete and coherent doctrinal system that brings together the essence of Christian theosophy (particularly that of the Neoplatonists Dionysius the Areopagite and Scotus Eriugena), of Kabbalah (Moses de León and Abraham Abulafia) and also of Islam. Thanks to the '*ars combinatoria*', the adept can communicate with all the planes of the universe, ascending and descending the ladder of the Art from the lowest level to the ineffable Deity. In a sense, Ramón Llull was the first to combine the Hebrew and Christian divine names, and his work undoubtedly inspired the magicians and humanists of the Renaissance who gave rise to the significant hermetic movement of Christian Kabbalah.

31

METATRON

In Module I, section [60](#), we discussed *Metatron* and linked him

with the archangel Michael; here we wish to expand somewhat on the subject of this enigmatic figure from Kabbalistic doctrine. We shall begin by noting that his name is numerically equivalent to the name *Shaddai* (314), which means 'the Almighty', and on certain occasions he is seen as the counterpart of the *Shekhinah*, the divine immanence. Such is his importance that he has sometimes been confused with the principle known as Moses and even with the Demiurge himself.

Indefinite and subtle is the great intermediary, guardian, envoy and mediator; he is *Sar Ha Gadol*, 'Great Prince', and *Kohen Ha Gadol*, 'High Priest', according to René Guénon, who regulates the relations between heaven and earth. He traverses the Tree of Life from *Kether* to *Malkhuth*, dwelling alternately in *Tifereth* (and here he is identified with Christ) and *Yesod*. His ascent and descent are axial.

But Kabbalah also recognises a dark side to *Metatron* and therefore to the *Shekhinah*. When evil was separated from good, the dross (*Keliphoth*) formed an inverted Adam: *Adam Belial*, and thus there is an inverted *Metatron*, the dark side of the angel *Michael*: *Samael*, an angel who has subjugated countless demons, chthonic and non-uranic entities, terrestrial and non-celestial, which are sometimes invoked in magical rites.

The *Shekhinah* is the image of God – emanating from Him – which makes Him intelligible, and is implicit in all Creation. Her male counterpart, *Metatron*, is divine power in action.

32

SACRED HISTORY

The interval between the end of the Middle Ages (which tradition dates to 1314 with the disappearance of the Knights Templar) and the beginnings of the Renaissance is characterised by a period in which the structures of traditional society rapidly weakened and degenerated. It is a relatively dark era, witnessing the birth of the Inquisition and the onset of ecclesiastical censorship against any expression of true esotericism. In a sense, the Hermetic Tradition – along with other initiatory organisations – withdraws into itself once more, following the rhythm dictated by the inexorable cyclical law of expansion and concentration to which all movements in history and life are subject. Furthermore, in the shadow of this tradition, numerous false alchemists emerged (the 'coal blowers', as they were disparagingly called) who sought only the manufacture of physical gold, ignoring or despising the cosmogonic and metaphysical aspects of *the Ars Magna*. These figures (who today would pass for 'traditionalists' of various stripes) did considerable harm, for with their greed and their vision limited to the purely material, they discredited the work of the true adepts, who, because of them, had to endure various papal bulls of condemnation and even persecution and imprisonment. But this is merely the downside inherent in all periods of transition, and conversely, the spirit of Hermeticism would continue to illuminate the various facets of Western culture. Thus, although the protective cover traditionally afforded by a traditional civilisation had all but vanished, this did not prevent numerous individuals (whether laypeople or members of religious orders) from continuing to preserve and disseminate the science and the

hermetic knowledge, which would become widely disseminated in European courts, where kings, princes and lords became patrons of alchemists, magicians, theurgists and astrologers. Likewise, the unbroken links between Hermeticism and the various orders of chivalry that survived or were established following the dissolution of the Knights Templar continued. The exploits and initiatory adventures contained in the chivalric literature of that period reveal a clear influence of Alchemy, from which it follows that Hermetic-Christian esotericism continued to exist, albeit in a more secret and veiled form. The same can be said of art, which, apart from architecture, saw particular dissemination through goldsmithing and the plastic arts, crafts inspired by the cosmogonic and spiritual message of the Great Work.

The first illuminated engravings also appeared, thereby introducing the elements of light and colour into the rich alchemical iconography, which thus acquired an undeniable aesthetic and symbolic beauty. Hermetic masters such as Juan de Rupescissa, Nicolas Flamel, Hortulano, Basilio Valentin and Bernardo Trevisano bore witness to the vigour of the Royal Art through their lives and works.

It should be noted that during this period the gradual expulsion of non-converted Jews from Spain was taking place, which was completed in 1492. This new exodus of a people who had already inhabited the Iberian Peninsula (which they called *Sefarad*, hence 'Sephardim') for several centuries before Christ (according to some chronicles, since the first destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem), enabled Kabbalah to spread throughout the rest of Europe, particularly in Italy, France, England and Germany. In these countries, significant Kabbalistic communities were established, which further intensified, if possible, the links with Hermeticism. Furthermore, it was Spanish Jews who translated almost all the Hermetic works from Arabic into Latin and vernacular languages, thanks to which they acquired profound knowledge of these sciences. Many of these scholars were also alchemists and astrologers. Thus, through the Jews, the Hermetic Tradition received a whole series of doctrinal elements from Kabbalah, which were definitively assimilated by it, becoming an integral part of it from that point onwards.

 [*Home Page*](#) 

Everything that lies beyond the scope of our current knowledge remains non-existent, as we are unable to name it. To name is, therefore, to give intelligible existence to things by extracting from them their identity, their quality and their universal meaning. This faculty, unique to humankind, has always been regarded as a divine legacy linked to spiritual intuition; it is no coincidence that it is Jehovah (YHVH) himself, in the account of Genesis, who grants Adam the power to name all things—that is, to attribute function and destiny to all beings and elements of this world in relation to their essential nature.

And whilst the world and reality themselves pre-exist us, it is insofar as an indefinite possibility of discovering them, of recreating the multitude of their different yet interconnected meanings, that life acquires meaning. All true knowledge begins, in effect, with the evocation or recollection of a meaning whose fullness one seeks to grasp; and meanings, in turn, crystallise into a name – equivalent to a sign, symbol, code or mark that always synthesises an aspect of cosmic and universal reality, a reality whose fullness (unity) is God or the Being in Itself.

Language, especially sacred language, is nothing other than the rhythmic articulation of all the intelligible possibilities of names. Given the universality of the ten *sefirot*, Kabbalistic doctrine attributes to them – in addition to their numerical values – the function and role of names, linked to the identity and inherent power of each specific aspect or attribute of the divinity they express; the same applies to the important role given to the 99 sublime epithets of *Allah* in the Islamic tradition.

In Kabbalah, archetypal names play a multifaceted cosmological role, serving both as binding relationships or energies and as vehicles of divine creativity. Thus, they are regarded interchangeably as: intelligences, angelic powers (builders and transformers), force-ideas, immutable proportions, etc.; it is therefore no coincidence that the science of names and the art of their invocation form an essential part of the methodology and initiatory rituals of all traditions. What in Buddhism is the chanting of *mantras* is *japa* in Hinduism, *dhikr* in Islam, and prayer itself in all; in short, particular forms of ritual invocation of the divine name.

In a less universal sense, the name also continues to reveal, even literally, the essence of its bearer. Through the name, the individual is distinguished from other individuals, being who they are and no other. Through form, on the other hand, they are identified with the species of which they are a particular representative. Similarly, the terms *Nama-Rupa* (name and form) denote, in Hinduism, the essence and substance of every individual being: the cosmological dimensions of its specific nature, that is, that through which this being simultaneously participates – at its own level – in the universal (celestial) and the particular (terrestrial); the name, in this case, symbolises the essential personality, so to speak, the self of this being which, being unique and at the same time identical to that of every being, has a truly universal connotation, whilst the form, being ‘specific’, is

is linked to its particular psychosomatic individuality, always conditioned by the limits and laws of the state of existence it occupies within cosmic reality.

To transcend, in this sense, the conditions of name and form, is equivalent to escaping the limitations inherent in individuality and species, gaining access to the informal and supra-individual, that is, to the higher states of being.

34

SACRED HISTORY: THE RENAISSANCE I

In previous sections we have seen how all the historical eras of which we have knowledge have played a specific role in the overall human cycle. What came to be known as the Renaissance, despite lasting barely two centuries, definitively shaped what would become the subsequent history of Europe and, by extension, of the world.

With the disappearance of the traditional model of society that the Middle Ages truly represented, a crisis of values arose that permeated all spheres of life and culture, marking yet another of those critical periods that recur cyclically throughout human history. The Renaissance emerged as a response to that crisis, but for reasons that can only be understood by taking a comprehensive and holistic view of cyclical laws, it also paved the way that was inevitably to lead to the era of anti-traditional subversion that characterises the modern world.

In reality, during the Renaissance a change took place that was to radically alter the social, political and religious structures that had hitherto prevailed in the West. As the supranational political unity known in the Middle Ages—a unity founded on the harmonious coexistence of temporal power and spiritual authority—fragmented, states and nations emerged, with the consequent rise of the selfish and particular interests of rulers, coupled with the ever-expanding power of a new social body: the administrative bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie; religious exotericism intensified its dogmatism, leading to a rupture with esotericism, which, since the disappearance of the Order of the Temple, had seen its spiritual influence diminish enormously.

All this inevitably leads to a loss of understanding of the symbolic and sacred relationships that humankind once maintained with the universe. A new concept, hitherto unthinkable, emerges: humanism, which reduces everything to a purely human perspective, excluding from its framework any direct intervention by the supernatural and the divine.

When the symbol is no longer understood in its full extent, and its power to evoke other vertical interpretations disappears, it is perfectly logical that the desire for knowledge, innate in man, should orient itself and seek answers on the exclusively horizontal and material plane. This is one of the reasons why the Renaissance was characterised as the age of great geographical discoveries, and why research began to focus on the purely mechanistic aspect of things, setting aside or ignoring the

spirit that animates them.

By the end of the Renaissance, men such as Descartes, with their empirical and rationalist theories, embodied this desacralised vision of the universe and of man. However, everything said so far remains merely the most external and peripheral viewpoint of this era of great contrasts that was the Renaissance. It also represented a continuation of traditional Western thought, which was not lost once and for all, but rather adopted other forms of expression in accordance with the new conditions of existence that were taking shape.



[fig. 32](#)

35

SACRED HISTORY: THE RENAISSANCE II

It is no coincidence that the word 'Renaissance' means a 'rebirth' of something that already existed, rather than something entirely different. This era witnessed a powerful resurgence of the Hermetic Tradition and the sciences associated with it, such as Alchemy and Astrology. We also see how this tradition became the receptacle into which various esoteric and traditional currents converged. Thus, in addition to the legacy left by medieval Christian Hermeticism (particularly through the orders of chivalry still in existence and certain initiatory organisations such as the 'Fieles de Amor', to which Dante belonged), we find the significant contribution of the Hebrew Kabbalah, which, as a result of the gradual expulsion of the Jews from Spain, spread to almost all the countries of Europe, and first and foremost in Italy, as we have said. At the same time, Kabbalistic wisdom was reconciled with Christianity, giving rise to what is known as Christian Kabbalah, whose principal inspiration was Pico della Mirandola, a disciple of Elias of Medigo, Gemistus Plethon and Marsilio Ficino.

Another significant event was the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Turks in 1453, a date commonly regarded as the beginning of the Renaissance. This led to numerous ancient

(Platonic, Pythagorean and Gnostic) to reach Italy and spread rapidly, thanks in particular to the invention of the printing press, one of the great achievements of the Renaissance.

Among all these influences, we must highlight the ‘rediscovery’ of Greco-Roman culture, which was particularly evident in architecture, painting, sculpture and philosophical thought. The new engraving techniques that emerged with the printing press were utilised to capture traditional knowledge, imbuing it with great artistic and symbolic beauty, as was the case with Dürer’s engravings, or the alchemical works of Michael Maier, Basilio Valentino and so many others. The *Mutus Liber* (known as the ‘Silent Book’ as it contains only images) is a clear example of the use of engraving as a means of transmitting doctrine, in this case alchemical doctrine. Numerous workshops and schools sprang up everywhere, teaching cosmological and hermetic disciplines, using the arts and crafts as their medium.

Alongside all these creative endeavours, many of the Renaissance’s hermetic masters were men of a liberal spirit and disposition who took an active part in the political and religious events of their time, a period characterised by the finest refinement in all cultural forms, as eloquently illustrated and exemplified in the visual arts by: Botticelli, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Benvenuto Cellini, etc., etc., art steeped in esoteric meaning, where the ‘figures’ and ‘images’ of the pictorial discourse are linked to perfectly clear ideas with didactic and cosmogonic intent, not to mention the marvellous formal techniques of these artists and the poetic-symbolic magic they displayed in their work, which continues to manifest itself today.



[fig. 33](#)

36 NOTE: MAGIC

By magic here (without disregarding lesser, ineffective and perverse forms of this science) is meant any ritual activity serving as an intermediary, dedicated to drawing celestial energies into earthly reality, in accordance with the doctrine of Kabbalistic emanations which subordinates the elemental and corporeal world to the animic and astral world, and both to the

strictly spiritual plane, or in other terminology: the intellectual plane. For this reason, both cultic practices and incantations, concentrations, meditations, studies, and especially prayer, must be carried out with the spirit and intellect focused on the highest truths, on the supreme and unknowable God, beyond His own creation. This will ensure that these magical—or rather, theurgical and celestial—practices, which presuppose a cosmogonic and metaphysical knowledge, are effective and appropriate in proportion to the needs being invoked. On the other hand, this downward movement of energies and forces that is brought about must be entirely subjective and internal, that is, of exclusive interest to the subject practising them in close connection with the benefit of Knowledge. Its characteristic must be the performance of a rite that is in harmony and rhythm with the universe, and these correspondences and analogies that one seeks to establish must be carried out with a total detachment from particular things; that is, with a high degree of ‘emptying’ and ‘impersonality’, so that the effusions from on high may pour down upon the ‘operator’ or apprentice magician, who might thus gain access to the most subtle and hidden truths and to the highest spheres of the Divine Intellect, to such an extent that his very being is identified at all times and in all places with the most transparent emanations of the cosmos and perceives its Unity and Majesty in all things, in a natural manner, for these truths are already consubstantial with his very being. In this kind of identification with the universe and that which lies beyond it, the Sephirotic Tree of Life plays an extraordinarily effective role, as a model of the universe and a vehicle and revelatory instrument (like the Tarot) for the energies mediating between the highest Deity and beings and things manifested in material, or elemental, form.

37

MAGIC AND ART

A pictorial representation is a frozen ceremony, a prototypical gesture capable of giving rise to countless other equally harmonious gestures. This is how the masters of the Renaissance conceived of Art, and this is true of most of their creations; for example, Botticelli’s ‘The Spring’, whose magical and esoteric content is evident, in that it conveys the emanations of the sweet mystery of life, fully perceived by the artist. Certainly, Leonardo shared this same conception and set out to demonstrate it not only through his visual art, but also through his science and the marriage of the two in mechanical-theatrical performances, where he manifested the cosmogonic model through a magnificent spectacle presented at the court of his patrons. Shakespeare also used poetry and theatre to express the esoteric, as did Renaissance artists—not only Italian, but German, French, Flemish and English (through expressions as seemingly diverse as the construction of hermetic symbolic gardens, or animated contraptions, etc., etc.)—well into the 18th century. Art was thus a rite, a magical ceremony aimed at establishing communication between heaven and earth, in the interests of a universal energetic harmony designated by the radiant name of Beauty.

Likewise, Magic and Art must be directly connected with Love, as a synonym for Union, which in everyday practice has not only

had to be identified with romantic ideals but also with the lavish genitality of the prototypical female (time and again individualised).

There is nothing more valuable than the adventure of Knowledge and its consequence, the energy of Thought—that is to say, the driving forces of Art that culminate in the ineffable pleasure of Contemplation. They are truly priceless, and if there is anything that can be called a luxury, it is this magic, which, paradoxically, lies within the immediate reach of anyone capable of taking a genuine interest in it; a magic which, in turn, brings about a genuine inner transformation.

In truth, this Introduction to Sacred Science, as well as being a method of self-knowledge, is a treatise on theurgic art that finds expression in the ordered images of a cosmogony and is revealed in the organisation of the imagination, through a precise—and, alas!—extremely purifying, to the point of touching individual limits and transcending them, bursting forth into the luminous realm of Knowledge and metaphysics, the origin and end of all power. This applies both to the figures of the Tarot, associated with mental images, and to everything the apprentice has worked on using the Kabbalistic model of the Tree of Life. The reader now possesses a dynamic archive of images and figures to which they can turn at any moment. Even these symbols will have an unconscious impact on them and will be the cause of new effects which, by transforming once more into causes, will ensure an uninterrupted magical work of participation in the cosmos through traditional archetypes that enable the constant regeneration of the divine artist's plan. These ritual practices of recreating images through memory lead to the recollection of the self, to Platonic 'reminiscence'; especially when meditation on the magical object one wishes to recall is undertaken not only through concentrated attention, but also when this attention, once exercised, can be released and fly in pursuit of an imagination that is by no means arbitrary, for it has been provoked and shaped by universal driving forces, subtle and living energies that ultimately manifest themselves in existential gestures, to the extent of not only signifying defined ideologies, but also determining ways of being and living, moral criteria and standards of conduct. The word 're-cognise', which we have used in this text, means to know twice. In particular, we use it in the sense of coming to know once more what we already knew, which is the same as discovering true identity, the intrinsic union with the Self and its indefinite reflections that perpetually modify and reconstruct the cosmos. That ritual, repeated re-cognition is the *raison d'être* of this manual, its authentic essence, its constant novelty, and the purpose of those who have designed it. We shall point out, even if it is nothing more than a coincidence, that the term 'reconocer' (to recognise), in Spanish, is a *palindrome*, meaning it can be read both from left to right and from right to left, which constitutes a *perfect* example of what is meant by inversion.

38

KABBALAH: THE NAME II

For Kabbalah, the name indicates the essence of that which is named and therefore its identity. This is so because it constitutes a metaphysics of language, and as such, the letters of the alphabet are the product of the divine Word and Writing, of its Word and its Scripture.

The divine name, the *Schem*, is endowed with a mysterious and absolute power, and anyone who knows or participates in any way in the knowledge of that name automatically shares in that power.

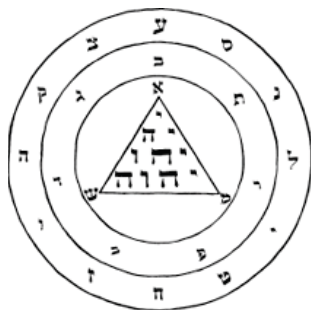
It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the name of *Yahweh* could not be pronounced (or even written correctly), since violating this prohibition would amount to tampering with an uncontrollable power beyond all limits or proportion. Thus, the deity was to be named only indirectly, or by certain attributes—and only under specific circumstances—since every sacred name carries an inalienable power, a secret it shares with all names; with anything named and even with the very possibility of naming.

This lends extraordinary importance to the word and its expression—writing—which leads to this supreme value being transferred to sacred texts, in particular the first five books of Moses, and to the Bible in general; this will be inherited by the ‘religions of the Book’: both by Christianity (with the addition of the New Testament) and by Islam (the Qur’an), a legacy that is reflected throughout Western culture. With the proviso that these texts are not a dead letter, but a living, permanent and contemporary word, and the book an organism with an inner energy from which a new light—the truth—constantly emerges to illuminate the cosmogonic and metaphysical secrets, revealed and veiled at the same time. This, of course, substantially alters the relationship between man and writing, and therefore that between man and reading, which in turn reflects his relationship with the name and the word—derived from thought and consciousness—which distinguish and define the human phenomenon. Thus, the Kabbalistic conception of man is closely linked to the possibility of naming, which is equivalent to saying the possibility of creating, or re-creating, of forming and re-forming the cosmos, which is ultimately nothing more than a set of names uttered by the Divine Word.

In the letter, then, lies the meaning of creation, which has been brought about precisely by the combinations and permutations of the signs of the Holy Cosmic Alphabet, written by the pen of God, whose name is woven in a hidden manner into each of those letters and into all the words and names, including the empty spaces left between the signs.

Origen states that, just like magic, the name and its power are not something vain and insignificant, but quite the contrary, a fearsome science; therefore, these magical names must be used with prudence and caution, their efficacy deriving from their pronunciation in their original language, for it is precisely the sound that acts.

Hebrew scholars developed these studies extensively, primarily through oral tradition, although there are numerous writings intended to awaken the sleeping genii through the invocation and writing of their names, or attributes, as has been done by all traditional or primitive cultures, even when they have not necessarily produced an alphabetic language, having expressed themselves through glyphs or ideographic emblems, or in some other analogous manner, through symbols that fixed the name, and thus what it represented, in perfect harmony with the cosmic order.



[fig. 34](#)



[Home Page](#)



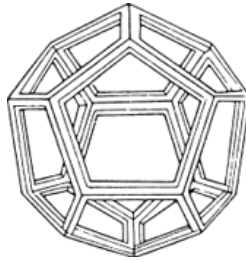
39 DAILY WORK

We wish to emphasise once again the necessity – indeed, the urgency – of daily inner work for those who seek Knowledge. Unfortunately, human nature is such that we tend to forget what truly interests us and what we have always sought, and we are betrayed by the senses; added to this is the influence of the contemporary social environment, which is utterly profane and removed from the authentic reality of what the world and human beings are and represent. This conditioning to a fixed, literal and false image of who we are and what surrounds us causes us to be absorbed by the undeniable force of the mediocrity of the environment, which, in countless ways—including through violence and ‘blackmail’—seeks to make us participate in the shallowness of its values.

The reader of this Programme knows that they must devote all their energies to this silent struggle with society (which is often manifested through the family) when confronting these conceptions, which, whether they like it or not, they too have internalised through a form of learning as false as it is mistaken; thus, they are confronting themselves and their own errors and miseries.

The apprentice alchemist has several weapons to win this war. The first is patience, a way of slowing down time; he also possesses various means to achieve his aims, which have been outlined throughout our Programme. The objective of these tasks, of the training provided by this manual, is to attain concentrated attention, the recollection and remembrance of oneself, and knowledge of cosmogonic secrets, with a view to engaging with metaphysics and contemplation through specific practices and exercises, such as study and meditation, as well as the cultivation of certain spiritual powers in relation to the visual and mental images that arise within us and act as catalysts for awakening consciousness.

But the apprentice theurgist knows at this stage of the journey that it is through daily perseverance that lasting achievements in his realisation can be attained. Thus, time and again he persists in his labours and struggles, driven by faith in the promise made to him (that he shall obtain a hundredfold more than he had) despite his hardships and thanks to his sacrifice. This is why he is able to say: ‘I redouble my efforts!’, especially in difficult circumstances, that is, in those where extra effort is essential and where the performance of the daily rite is seen not only as advisable, but as indispensable, the only salvation in a world such as the one in which we find ourselves living.



[fig. 35](#)

For all these reasons, we take the liberty of recommending once again to our readers that they re-read the Agartha Programme. Not only because you will have a different perspective on what is said there, but also because in many respects it will be like new to you, such is the extent to which you have been able to alter your criteria and your perspective. This exercise will allow you to draw comparisons between your old conceptions and the new ones, and thus establish your degree of ‘progress’, or rather: the portion of the ascending spiral path. Your elevation from the plane of literal vision to the subtle perceptions of other forms of consciousness—which together constitute a different atmosphere for the development of the self—has reached such a point that one can now speak of a ‘before’ and a ‘now’, of an ‘old man’ and therefore a ‘new man’, of a metamorphosis, or better still, of authentic metanoia.

We must therefore continue to trust in memory, which, duly trained through practice and study, through the inner writing we imprint upon it, will become a constant energy that acts of its own accord, as if manifesting a magical and divine order.

40

CHIROLOGY

The Kabbalah attributes a profound sacred significance to the hand, which serves as a symbolic model. The same applies to other traditions such as Hermeticism or Islam (see, for example, in the latter, the talismanic importance of the hand of Fatima, the Prophet’s daughter). The two hands joined together, with their respective five plus five fingers, are an image of the archetypal denarius model and therefore of the reality expressed by the *Sephirotic Tree of Life*. But what is understood today by palmistry or chirology (from the Greek *kheir*, hand) is a vestige, thoroughly distorted – as is modern astrology too – of what was once a science of spiritual and oracular scope. We must, therefore, insist that all the mantic and divinatory arts in general assume their true meaning and function only insofar as they are framed within a spiritual and initiatory perspective of man and the world, free from all superstition and literalism. And this even though it is taken for granted that the map of our own destiny and nature is imprinted on the hands, as well as on the face or in our physical constitution. In any case, it is well known that the entire earthly and corporeal realm is a reflection or imprint of a celestial model, so that every part of its geography bears

a symbolic message that does nothing but manifest that model on one level (this is, for example, how, as a newborn, the Buddha Shakyamuni's priests deciphered his significant spiritual destiny based on the 32 signs imprinted on his skin).



[Fig. 36](#)

Each finger, line and area of the hand is, in effect, assigned a correspondence with a specific deity, linked above all to astrological and alchemical symbolism: the thumb to Venus, the index finger to Jupiter, the middle finger to Saturn, the ring finger to the Sun and the little finger to Mercury. However, when deciphering the various meanings and symbolic analogies of the signs, one must take into account the mutability – and therefore relativity – of the sensible and corporeal world, which is inherent to phenomena and change. The signs of physical topography change in their configuration and details as the organism itself is constantly changing, and even more so its external appearance. To establish, therefore, overly rigid systems of interpretation is to risk inevitably falling into the error of mistaking the relative for the absolute. In fact, just as in the case of physiognomy, every tradition or people has its own variants of interpretation, valid in most cases for its own race and linked to its own symbolic parameters, which does not mean that, at heart, there is no essential unanimity of meaning amongst them. Finally, let us say that the left hand is related to the ancestral and the individual's psychic heritage, to their latent possibilities, whilst the right hand is related to their personality and their present reality, that is, to the effective realisation of all that, on the left, is potential and instinctive; a relationship analogous, moreover, to that of the entire microcosmic symmetry.

41

KABBALAH

At the beginning of our Programme (Module I, section 25) we outlined the analogies between the model of the Tree of Life and the human body. There we proposed certain correspondences and suggested visualisations

suitable for them. There we also stated that in future practices we would attempt the reversal of energy polarity. That is what we shall now do in accordance with the following table:

<i>Kether:</i>	the crown
<i>Hokhmah:</i>	eye and right cerebral hemisphere
<i>Binah:</i>	eye and left cerebral hemisphere
<i>Hesed:</i>	right arm
<i>Gueburah:</i>	left arm
<i>Tifereth:</i>	heart, solar plexus
<i>Netsah:</i>	right leg and hip
<i>Hod:</i>	left leg and hip
<i>Yesod:</i>	the genitals
<i>Malkhuth:</i>	base, soles of the feet

In future we shall regulate and organise our visualisations as well as our ‘speculations’ (the mirror always reflects inverted images, just as our hands are inverted in relation to one another, and likewise the two halves of the cerebral hemispheres) in accordance with the present version, which is not only Kabbalistic but also corresponds with other traditions.

Therefore, the right hand will no longer represent rigour and justice, but mercy and grace (Hesed) and will be the hand of blessing. Likewise, Hokhmah will be the right eye and the cerebral hemisphere representing the straight (or right) intention (see Module I, section 40), and the left column will relate to the passive, the limiting and constricting. This is a radical way of reconciling opposites, through a practical exercise that must necessarily unify the opposites on the central axis.

The orientation we now provide is particularly relevant for the peoples of the northern hemisphere and takes the North Star as its reference point, situated at that cardinal point, the north, towards which one looks. The orientation we have followed thus far faces south, and is guided by the Southern Cross, visible in that hemisphere. East and west correspond in both situations to different arms of the human figure, although obviously their essential meaning—associated with sunrise and sunset—remains unchanged.

42

THE STAR AND THE EAR OF CORN

The repeated journey through the dimensions of the human world, in the light of the star encountered in the instant of another, more timeless moment, close to the origins—a journey of recognition of the qualitative directions of the cube-box of the cosmos—is also the recognition of the sacred work of art, which possesses the quality of a hologram, itself a work of light, in

in which the part is immanent within the Whole. The human world is a unified whole, a web of relationships and tensions that find their balance in its ever-virginal centre. These journeys are no different from the soul's realisation as it recognises its qualities, its design, its prototypical form marked by the divine proportion which likewise arises from the relationship between the Star and the circumference of its boundary. This golden rule, or golden ratio, is the true name of things, their reality in the primordial Man who redeems them by returning the world to its Beginning, in the synthesis of its primal abode.

But to find the Star, the seal of the true life of the microcosm, is also to find death, not as the profane world understands it, but in the name of another light, more than intelligible, not cosmic, in comparison to which the former is but a pale reflection. Indeed, that which gives life is, by that very fact, marked by death. The affirmation of being conceals all that which can only be expressed in negative terms, for it is ineffable. In the heart of the temple, the altar—the centre where the influences of the celestial and the terrestrial, the vertical and the horizontal, are balanced—a secret sacrifice may take place, characterised by the abandonment of all reflection, in which the officiant and the victim are one. Everything has been given and must be returned, with the gratuitousness proper to a Reality that has never seen itself as an owner, for it is Non-Dual.

The ear of corn, which the Sun caused to grow by rising above the meridian, could not continue to grow indefinitely. Its own weight, which it owes to the Earth, bends it upon itself, tracing the anagram of an archetypal Name through which all things are made new.

43

ALCHEMY

Generally, when the Alchemical Science is mentioned, one thinks of that pertaining to the mineral kingdom, whose objective is the creation of metallic gold through the philosopher's stone. This form of the Royal Art is the transmutation that takes place in the *athanor* or furnace through various procedures and stages which the adept relates to his own internal initiatory process, analogous to any gestation, beginning with that of the Universe. However, we have already mentioned plant alchemy as an identical possibility, which uses the human body itself as an *athanor* and pursues exactly the same aims, namely the full realisation of human potential through the constant conjunction of the opposing energies that lie deep within the soul. We must also mention an alchemy developed through breathing, which aims to fix the vital breath (the *prāna* of the Hindus) as the constant, fluid and permanent nourishment of the whole of creation.

It is necessary to clarify that all these forms of alchemy are equally valid and refer to identical cosmogonic principles that manifest themselves in essentially the same way, even though the forms of expression may differ; this is why the same symbols and the sequence of operations described in metallic alchemy (beginning with mercury) remain valid, even though the raw material to be used is different. It is also worth noting here sexual alchemy as another operational modality, closely linked to what in Hinduism and Buddhism is called

tantra. All these aspects share the idea of regeneration and are therefore linked to concepts relating to ‘long life’, ‘universal medicine’ and even ‘immortality’, which is evident in Taoism.

We would also like to emphasise that alchemy has been called the science of mirrors, and that these speculations constitute, in every case, a sequential process of dissolutions and sublimations, dissociations and associations, deaths and resurrections—processes that are neither indefinite nor lost in the void of a gesture as repetitive as it is banal, but rather aspire to a final achievement, in which they, and therefore alchemy, acquire their true meaning.

44

VIRGIL-DANTE I

It has been quite common, in the history of traditional civilisations, that when these, due to cyclical imperatives, were on the verge of disappearing, the metaphysical and cosmological doctrine that ordered their culture and their lives took refuge in the works of certain key figures, with the aim of ensuring that said doctrine was not lost forever. The destiny of men of Knowledge living during such critical periods is, in part, contingent upon this mission of safeguarding. Such was the case with Dante in relation to the Middle Ages. It was in *The Divine Comedy* that Dante gathered and captured the essence of Christian esotericism, which was represented by certain artisanal, hermetic and chivalric groups, such as the Templar Order. As we mentioned in a previous section, the very organisation to which Dante belonged, the ‘Fideli d’Amore’, was considered a branch of the Order of the Temple itself; it is therefore reasonable to assume that when the Order disappeared in 1314, the ‘Fideli d’Amore’ would continue to preserve—albeit in a more hidden and veiled form—much of the initiatic and traditional teaching held by the Knights Templar. It is this spiritual heritage that truly constitutes the central axis underpinning *the entire Divine Comedy*, and any reading of this work must take this fact into account if one wishes to grasp the profound meaning it contains.

However, there are other traditional sources present in Dante’s poem, which is hardly surprising given the crossroads of cultures that converged in the medieval era. Specifically, we refer to the presence of the Greco-Latin tradition, represented in the *Comedy* by Virgil, whom Dante calls master, lord and guide. Virgil was to the Greco-Roman tradition what Dante was to Christian esotericism: an initiate who preserved the essence of his culture in his works, particularly in *the Georgics* and *the Aeneid*. In *the Aeneid*, for example, we find a series of references to the doctrine of cycles, and Dante undoubtedly drew upon them in *the Divine Comedy*. All this indicates that the tradition represented by Virgil remained alive in Dante’s time, and would continue to do so beyond it, as the very foundation of Western culture and sacred history, and whose legacy is received by all born into it, whether we are aware of it or not.

Focusing on the perspective of the initiatory process, and considering that in relation to it, sacred history and geography – insofar as

express universal laws—also constitute an important factor to bear in mind, it can be said that the Greco-Latin tradition represents for Dante the legacy of his ancestors; a legacy imprinted by ‘spiritual kinship’ upon the soul of the Florentine poet. When, on his ‘journey’, Dante enters the intermediate region of the subtle world, symbolised by ‘Limbo’, and beholds the souls of the righteous who dwell there (those of Homer, Aeneas, Hector, Caesar, Ovid, Horace, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Heraclitus, Zeno, Diogenes, Anaxagoras, Thales, Empedocles, Euclid, Ptolemy, etc.), he ‘recognises’ within himself that traditional heritage; it is thanks to this, and together with his guide Virgil, that he is subsequently able to undertake the arduous and perilous descent through the circles of Hell, which entail an immersion into the darkest aspect of the psyche: the lowest depths of the human condition that must be definitively exhausted before the ascent to the heavens and the higher realms.



[fig. 37](#)

45

THE FUNDAMENTAL METHOD

The study and meditation on the Hermetic texts, the teachings of the *Sephirotic* Kabbalah, the imagery and fluid structure presented by the Tarot, as well as those of Alchemy and its operations, and those of Astrological and Pythagorean science, and Platonic discourse, produce in the contemplating soul a reunion with Perennial Gnosis—knowledge and wisdom obtained through the gradual ascent through the spheres and experienced in a vital way through a fundamentally individual theurgy. That is to say, an ‘objective’ method that is embodied in a ‘subjective’ manner, in a ‘magical’ form.

This is, of course, due to the correspondence between all planes of reality, both in the macrocosm and the microcosm, and the love between their parts which, starting from the Original Unity, the first determination of Non-Being, is articulated from the Idea and the Archetype down to the most concrete materiality of our sensible world through the intermediate plane, populated by informal and subtle spiritual entities that act as concrete messengers of the highest emanations of which they are recipients, and which they transmute into vibrations, which in turn generate the innumerable energies of the lowest realm. For Hermeticism, it suffices merely to reverse this descending process (which in man has been termed Spirit-Soul-Body), that is, to make it ascending in order thus to rise back up to the first Principle, sheltered and protected by the celestial dew, the crystallisation of the supra-

celestial.

46

VIRGIL-DANTE II

In initiatory symbolism, the ‘gate of the underworld’, or *Ianua Inferni*, which is precisely the ‘gate of men’ or of the ‘ancestors’, is the one that the being in search of spiritual fulfilment must pass through before emerging through the ‘gate of the gods’, or *Ianua Coeli*, the one that grants access to supra-individual or supra-human states. But with the descent through the underworld or ‘realm of the dead’, Virgil’s role as guide does not end, but continues throughout the no less arduous ascent up the mountain of Purgatory, during which Dante is purified and reborn from the ‘seven deadly sins’, the negative counterpart of the ‘seven virtues’, a double septenary that manifests the ambivalent energies of the planets. Furthermore, the journey he undertakes on his ascent is equivalent to the rites of passage. Likewise, the literary structure of *The Divine Comedy* (and especially Hell and Purgatory) is also inspired by Virgil’s *Aeneid* (specifically Canto VI), which recounts the descent of the Trojan hero Aeneas into the cave of the Cumaean Sibyl. Furthermore, this same pattern, which is universal in nature, is repeated in the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries, as well as in Ulysses’ descent into the cave of the nymphs. Likewise, one must consider the influence of Islam, and specifically the account of the most important spiritual master of Sufism, Muhyiddin ibn Arabi, who in his work *The Meccan Revelations* describes Muhammad’s ‘night journey’ through the three worlds.

It is important to note that Virgil also symbolises the human reason that must prevail firmly within the initiate so that he does not succumb to the three types of dangers he must face on his descent into the underworld: the fall into the quagmire, the turning back, and petrification. In this case, reason must be understood as the synthesis of all the faculties and virtues corresponding to the human condition and which, for that very reason, reflect and manifest divine Reason or Intelligence. In this way, reason (in the sense we are giving it, and not in the sense attributed to it by ‘rationalism’) represents, like the radius of a circle, the straight path, or ‘right intention’, which must not be lost on that labyrinthine journey from the periphery of oneself to the centre or innermost point where our true identity resides. It is only when Dante reaches the Earthly Paradise – situated at the summit of the mountain of Purgatory – that Virgil, that is to say the tradition of his ancestors, has fulfilled his mission with regard to human horizontality. In the Earthly Paradise (the centre of our state of existence) Dante finds Beatrice, the embodiment of transcendent Wisdom and Beauty, and together with her he embarks on the journey, this time vertical, through the various planetary heavens that symbolise the higher states of being, until he attains the fullness of Knowledge and access to the Celestial Paradise, where resides ‘... the Love that moves the Sun and the other stars.’

47 ON THE INNER WORK

We would like to suggest, if you have not already done so, that you study this Introduction to Sacred Science in the evening. At the start of our Programme, it is more advisable (though by no means necessary or essential) to carry out the readings and meditations during the daytime, particularly in the morning, before facing the profane, everyday world. If this has been your practice, begin now to practise at night. Conversely, if you have been practising at night up to now, you should start doing so during the day, at least for a certain period. In reality, there are adepts who say that alchemical work should be carried out from midday onwards, and others who for years have worked only from midnight onwards, once they have understood—with their eyes wide open, whilst awake in the mornings and afternoons—the nature of their operations and studies.

It should be clarified that this night-time schedule is recommended not only because of the greater tranquillity offered by the night in modern life and contemporary cities, but also because of the energy-force it entails, intimately linked to the descent into the earth's interior, or the deepening of all aspects and planes of our existence, just as the sun does on its journey, to be reborn at every dawn, brimming with beauty.

Dreaming of the model of the Kabbalistic universe, our Sephirotic Tree of Life, also represents a very interesting form of assimilation and learning. If the latter has not yet happened to you, carry out your study and meditation before going to bed with the firm intention that this may emerge in your dreams.

We would also like to suggest another practice: begin meditating on as many full moon nights as you can, or as many as you are able. Do so alone or with one or more friends who are currently following or have followed the Programme. Rest assured that many other people in different parts of the world are doing the same as you. Join them and feel the power of the energy of Goodwill, and the fullness of Agartha in action.

Spend half an hour to an hour on this.

Join us in these practices, whose sole intention is complete surrender to a Higher Power and prayer for our brothers and sisters lost in the confusion of a profane world. Recharge your batteries and enjoy the Peace of the Lord and a life that is becoming less and less oppressive.

The struggle to free ourselves from the conditioning that shapes us and to which we unconsciously submit (making us their slaves, if not their accomplices, for fear of destroying what we supposedly are and of changing our way of being and existing) must be carried out with the warrior's purity and by invoking the grace of the deities, so that the spirits may guide us through the intricate labyrinth of destiny. The fruit of our longing is the virginity capable of raising our entire little cosmos anew, having put an end to outdated conceptions, but now building upon an order we have chosen. One might think that building upon a model analogous to the universe itself is precisely our conditioning. In that case, we would be

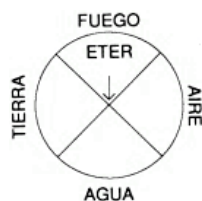
governed by the numina that mark our path, and obedience to the inner voices would be to gain access to their love and mercy. Something that undoubtedly has to do with the sacred to the detriment of the profane, marked by the egotistical and literal reading, or the psychological or social interpretation, or any other cultural programming, which makes us be what power and the environment determine in their ignorance. There has been no tyranny like it, nor one that even remotely resembles, in its totalitarianism, what is taking place in modern society, even though the latter seeks to dazzle us with its technology, its so-called democracies and its repressive methods so refined that they operate subliminally. An ageing world with no future, without a doubt.

48

ALCHEMY

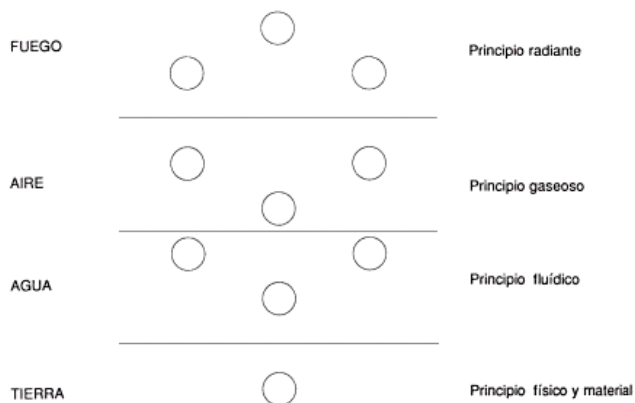
The Four Elements (2). The four elements—or rather, the four principles they symbolise (which constitute every possible form of manifestation and, consequently, that of all matter, since matter is the combination of these principles or elements in rotation, alternating with one another; which are nothing but the emanation of a single universal creative principle that takes on different modes or forms designated by different names) are called, as the student of this Introduction to Sacred Science is well aware, fire, air, water and earth. Fire symbolises the radiant principle, which is the highest of all. In the Tree of Life, it corresponds to *Atziluth*, to the ontological, that is, to Being, and to the Spirit. It is the first potential of matter, the spermiatic breath of sulphur capable of fertilising the mercurial potency, penetration through the word, that is, the pure light symbolised by this radiant principle, materialised in that which signifies the igneous, of which fire is the emblem. The next element, or state of matter, is air or gaseous and subtle energy, corresponding to the lightness and instability of the emotional, to the plane of *Beriyah*, to the first construction of the cosmogonic, to the sublimation of the fluidic, to the transmission of all possibility, to the breath of air as the cause of the generosity of the rains and plant generation, and also to the higher soul, which lies above the surface of the waters. The third element is water, condensed gas, or fluidic energy, capable, as has already been said, of generating, but also of corroding. All matter is softened by water, which likewise always finds a channel and is capable of adapting to whatever form it encounters. It corresponds to the plane of *Yetsirah* and to the dangerous and attractive lower psyche; to beauty and the arts. It also corresponds to a condensation of the aerial and therefore to a progressive solidification, to a transformation of that radiant principle, of that first emanation which expressed itself as a breath and which now, upon coagulating, presents itself in a liquid state. The final element is earth, which is the receptacle and

in turn contains within its bosom the remaining principles, elements, or states of matter, and is the solidified energy of that matter, the *summa* of its density and of its possibilities for concretisation. It corresponds to the plane of *Asiyah*, to the great mother, to the power of the permanent act, to the passive in continuous motion, to the ultimate manifestation of universal perfection, mirror of the perfection of its creator.



There is a fifth element, which is the ether, usually symbolised at the centre of a wheel from which the other four principles radiate, and around which they revolve. It is thus the source to which they constantly return and the hidden root of all things, a 'motionless motor' more closely related to Non-Being than to Being, akin to *Ain* and *En Soph*: to the authentically metaphysical, the invisible, the inexpressible, the truly unknown, that which lies above the crown, which still rests upon the head, emblem of the mineral body.

These four elements are constituted by the three alchemical principles: sulphur, mercury and salt, which constantly interact with one another, just as these elements do amongst themselves. They have been likened to a wheel within a wheel, or to a wheel that encompasses twelve possibilities (3×4), the zodiac (see Module II, section [73](#)). These three principles, as we know, are present in all 'matter' or energy, whether that energy is in a radiant, gaseous, fluid, or solid state. We can associate these three principles with Osiris (+), Isis (-), and Horus (N), the son of both, who therefore contains a part of each, to whom he owes his existence. Above all, however, we must link them to the Tree of Life and its three pillars, which solidify in four successive stages that nevertheless coexist within any matter, just as the four planes or worlds of the Tree of Life coexist with one another.



We must clarify that in both Hermetic work and instrumental Alchemy, the inner work is the reverse of the creative emanations. It goes against the grain, and one must travel upstream to its sources.

that is precisely why we speak of a work. Physical matter must be progressively discarded and refined, from the opaque to the transparent.

49 NOTE: REMEMBRANCE, CENTRE AND PERIPHERY

The ‘anthropomorphic’, like any expression of the world accessible to the senses, possesses no special advantage that justifies the arrogance with which modern man visualises his status in the world that is his lot, which is none other than that which he recreates through his attitude. Quite the contrary, the chronic inadequacy that leads him to overvalue the visible and sensational (sensation) over the invisible and signifying – if indeed he ever considers the latter – is the very expedient that shuts the door on the regenerative possibility inherent in the remembrance of the sacred.

That very internal gesture which confines him within the limits of the individual – the particular – the literal, sustained by the daily forgetfulness that renders it mechanical, conceals his original filiation and does not allow the world, of which he might be the centre, to manifest itself to him as a mandala capable of revealing his primal, timeless identity.

Simultaneously, the multiplicity of egoic aspects progresses indefinitely, as is characteristic of the world of quantity.

And yet, the primordial man, elusive to history, remains himself in each of the symbolic images (which have never been in vain) of these posthumous children, born into individuality in that dark dimension of the cycle in which the human being, severed from his mythical origins that link him to his true ancestors, is cast, by the very nature of things, to the periphery of the wheel, to the densest and most relative, becoming a victim, like a fallen creature, of all that he could and ought to be naming, knowing from its first source.

Now, when the human being, perhaps thanks to a profound curiosity, or to a still lucid melancholy, allows himself the memory of a prototypical past, that is, of an origin capable of being the origin of all things, they may find that they are not alone, that whilst there is something only they themselves can achieve, by listening to the voices that are heard only in silence, there is also a true family of the spirit, known not only from the past but also from the future, since its messages bring the memory of that which has always transcended historical times.

These true ‘ancestors’ in the realm of knowledge—that is, of true being—are, through the teaching they articulate, the manifold manifestation, diverse in form yet singular in essence, of the original driving force which, as an archetypal and secret master, projects itself into the centre of all times or cycles, thereby bringing them to fruition.

The loving aspiration towards the transcendent restores to the world, in an immanent form, the presence of the non-dual, through which the Book of Life is regenerated—a work that the spirit accomplishes by recognising itself in that which has always been revealing it.

In other words, the gathering of the scattered occurs not only in the

of man, through its reference to the archetypal; the Heart of the World, or that which appears as the zenith for a state of being such as the human, has no separating aspects other than those projected from a particular state of existence. In itself, it is nothing other than the real and effective presence of the divine. It is evident that being able to experience it in this way has much to do with true anonymity, internal above all, in which the Self need not adorn itself with personal pronouns.

The world, seemingly already solidified and finished, fit for consumption as glimpsed through the prison of the mind—the result of a rootless tree, felled in a gesture of appropriation typical of the ego—can be set right again in the living memory of those who, thanks to repeated sacrifice in the Name of that which will never be accessible to the senses, will have regained the ‘sense of eternity’, which redeems any cycle, which only from the ‘profane’ point of view appears to be left to its own devices.

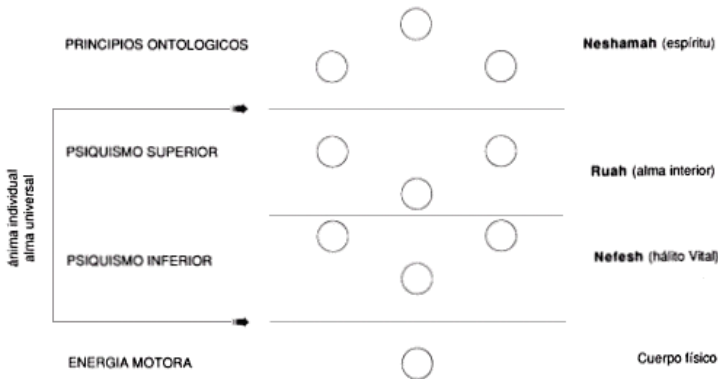
50 THE ASPECTS OF THE SOUL

The degrees of the human soul, or the planes of consciousness in which they manifest, are three, corresponding to the worlds of the *Sephirotic* Tree, and therefore have three designations: *nefesh*, for the vital breath; *ruah*, for the inner soul; and *neshamah*, for the spirit.

It is very important to emphasise that, for Kabbalah, the three planes are contained one within the other, yet each has its own name or dwelling place.

In hermetic work, the driving energy awakens, or rather, is awakened, and if it is properly guided (with humility, patience and truth), it will be able to stimulate *nefesh*, which in turn can transport us to *ruah*, the world of the higher psyche, to the point of inflaming it; in which case, it is very possible that the door to *neshamah*, the pure spirit, will open for us.

We shall now present these correspondences, illustrated in the Tree of Life.



One of the least understood concepts within traditional thought is that of the caste system, due to the confusion that the modern world (which emerged during the Renaissance, took shape in the 17th and 18th centuries, and became fully established in the 19th and 20th centuries) has cast upon this subject, conflating it with its own problems, its political and economic revolutions, and its divisions relating to social classes (true taboos) and subsequently the clash between these, and thus the rupture of the national and international fabric.

We shall attempt to shed some light on the subject in the light of what the reader already knows about traditional thought. However, before addressing this misunderstanding, certain doubts must be dispelled and some necessary foundations laid for clarification:

a) The subject of castes has nothing to do with the contemporary division of social classes, which is why the aspirant to Knowledge, still a product of his historical conditioning, has nothing similar in his store of images that he might take as a point of reference; it is therefore advisable not to extrapolate information, and even less to attempt to judge, using exclusively contemporary elements—which are assumed to be universal—past societies about which nothing is known.

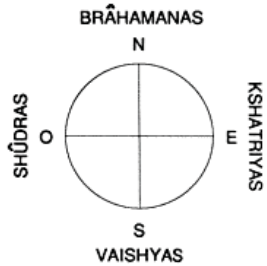
To give just one example, we might say that the most powerful and *high-status* men and women of today—presidents, prime ministers, leaders, and even kings and nobles—can be regarded from a traditional, or spiritual, perspective as members of the lowest caste of beings ever known in this human cycle of existence.

b) The division into four castes is not an arbitrary or random fact, but corresponds to the natural order of things and the fourfold division of any manifestation. It is therefore a cosmological reality verifiable in any society and/or culture.

c) For the purposes of this section, we shall use Hindu terminology to refer to the matter, as it is the clearest and best known, grouping men into four groups known as *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shûdras*. The first corresponds to the priestly or sapiential class. The second to warriors and the nobility; the third to artisans, merchants and administrators; and the last to servants. Those born into the first three may be reborn into the Supreme Identity; they may be initiated into the mysteries. Those who belong by birth to the fourth are destined for reincarnation in the wheel of existence, even if they are millionaires, political leaders, or successful artists—or perhaps precisely because of that, given the degradation of the world in which we live. It should be noted that this division into castes, or classes, is not unique to the Hindu tradition, but is also evident in China (and throughout the Far East and the Middle East), in pre-Columbian America, and even in tribal cultures considered as ‘primitive’ as those of Black Africa. In the social organisation of the Western Middle Ages it is evident, inherited not only from Christian concepts (Christ the King, for example) but

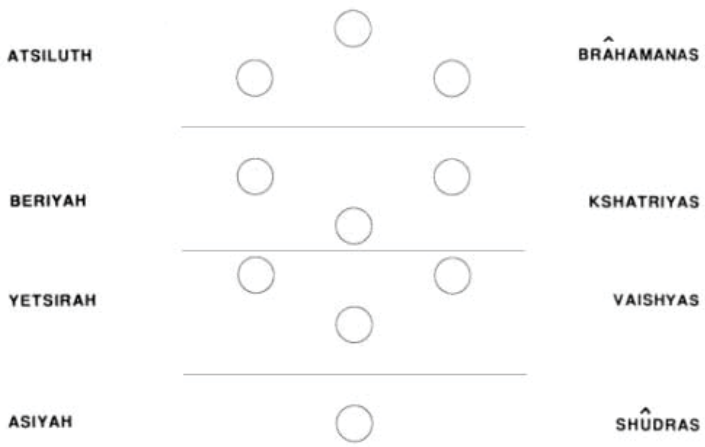
equally from the ancient Nordic and Celtic cultures, as well as from the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Greeks and Romans. Among the Hebrews, it is clear-cut between the priest-kings (or rather king-priests) and the hierarchical retinue of their courts.

We shall now illustrate this concept with the symbol of the circle, or circularity, well known to our readers who have already worked extensively with it.



It goes without saying that this representation also encompasses all the interpretations and speculations we have already made about it, just as the various meanings and interpretations of the symbol overlap.

We shall now develop this in the Tree of Life:



In this case too, the division into castes (expressed here using Hindu terminology) must be related to everything we have seen so far in the *Sephirotic* model.

The predominance of one caste or another must be related, on the one hand, to the cycle and historical time; on the other, to the hierarchy or reading of levels, or degrees of consciousness, present in any reality.

To conclude, we wish to refer to a fifth caste: *Hamsa*. This is in truth a non-caste and must be placed above the Tree of Life. It corresponds to unconditioned beings, or those who, having been conditioned by birth, have been liberated from their determination. These initiates are called *ativarna*, always using Hindu terminology.

52

SCIENCE

What is understood today as science – profane science – also has a sacred origin (like all the Liberal Arts) which has been degrading since its beginnings, when the observation of natural phenomena revealed the workings of the great machine of the world, manifested through the structures of cosmogony, which ultimately symbolised that which lay beyond it. That is to say, natural laws as signs and archetypes of the supernatural and as its seal upon things and beings, including humans, as alchemy did by virtue of the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm.

And it is worth noting that authors such as Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Newton (especially the latter), and many others, viewed their individual works as directly linked to the Universal, in search of Knowledge, venturing to the limits of their intellectual capabilities within a metaphysical context, as true Hermeticists.

Broadly speaking, since the Renaissance, the modern world has fully realised its assumptions and has become increasingly solidified as a result of cyclical events, and this coincides with the emergence of modern science, or profane science. However, the founders of this science never denied their sacred interests. Quite the contrary: Roger Bacon, who might be called its most distant medieval predecessor, regarded experimental facts as visible forms of invisible forces – which underpins analogy and therefore theurgy – and one would need to examine his work to discern his interests. Or consider the aforementioned Newton, who devoted more time and interest to his biblical research than to his strictly ‘scientific’ pursuits. His law of gravity illustrates the correspondences and thus sympathetic magic, as he knew, although he chose to present his theory in mechanical terms.

53

SCIENCE I

A linear conception of the universe, time and space leads to these being experienced in a rigid and fixed manner, in accordance with the literalism of a mindset capable only of glimpsing the most immediate aspects of what the senses perceive. In the present day, science has taken on almost exclusively quantitative forms of measurement, reducing scientific problems to mere statistics, which amounts to abandoning the search for the essence and causes of phenomena – of whatever nature they may be – in favour of the convenience of their mere description and their effects. Unfortunately, this way of thinking undermines mainstream science, which empirically categorises things according to their most superficial characteristics, without taking into account the

factors of constant change to which any phenomenon is subject, and regards contemporary man—who is entirely conditioned by his environment and ideology—as a universally valid model to be applied in all circumstances. In reality, it does the same with any phenomenon, be it subatomic or stellar, and ends up mechanising its view of life to such an extent that it is incapable of distinguishing between theory and the phenomenon itself. We have already stated that this so-called official science is at odds with the latest scientific research, much of which has emerged from Einstein's theories, yet these have not yet been able to transform the official framework (see Module I, section [66](#)).

The universe is in constant motion, and entire systems of stars—forming galaxies and planets—are constantly contracting and expanding; just like subatomic particles, they form different alternative systems at supersonic speeds. This occurs in perfect cyclical and rhythmic coordination with all the elements that make up this living, perpetually expanding universe.

Thus, in our ignorance, we humans go about like those donkeys with a stick held above and in front of their heads, from which a carrot hangs, causing the beast to walk and run in the hope of obtaining its food without ever being able to reach it.

The Milky Way is an immense ring of gas and stars that revolves perpetually above our heads like a wheel. Physical matter, too, is neither inert nor passive, but constantly vibrates in an undulating dance whose patterns of movement are determined by molecular, atomic and nuclear structures.

All this holds a secret, the revelation of which is the origin of the whole. Any work speaks of its creator if there is no difference between the author and the work. Manifestation is the signature of God, and hence the supreme importance of Science, whose starting point is experience, which likewise constitutes the ultimate goal of Knowledge. From the visible to the invisible through the medium of true science.

54

ALPHABET AND WRITING

The various esoteric traditions coexist and are identical in essence, whilst the exoteric aspects of the different traditions take forms that set them against one another. This holds true for the sum of the various traditional forms and their symbols, rites and myths. Whilst the esoteric is internal and refers to immutable principles, the exoteric emphasises the superficial and the manifold. The esoteric unites, the exoteric divides (see Module I, section [2](#)).

This is evident in the Hebrew and Arabic traditions, which are today so opposed in material terms, resulting in religious, social, economic and political hatreds and differences. However, the roots and even the trunk are common to both traditions despite the differences in the flowers and fruits, and the initiates and esotericists of both (Sufis and Kabbalists) refer not only to the same Being and to an identical and Supreme reality, but their methods for approaching it are strikingly similar. Let us add that the esotericists of both traditions have been and are

persecuted by official and religious exotericism.

This identity is evident in the alphabets, pointing from the outset to the profound analogy that exists between them, and with the caveat that although the Islamic alphabet has 28 letters, it corresponds perfectly with the Hebrew one (some of these letters are practically identical). Furthermore, each letter corresponds to a number, and analogous calculations are made in both languages regarding the value of the signs. The Supreme Name has four letters among both Jews and Arabs, which are associated with the four elements, the four cardinal points, the qualities of divine power, etc.

The great testimony of Islam (the *shahada*) consists of four words, seven syllables and twelve letters, just as the *Sefer Yetzirah* also states. Creation is regarded as a book of which creatures are the letters. The universe is a text, a discourse brought about by the expansion of the Word, which constitutes the book of the world. Thus, both the Qur'an and the Bible are sacred revelatory texts that express the totality of the cosmos, capable of being read in various hierarchical and esoteric ways that truly manifest the Supreme Spirit.

Islamic scholars devoted to the science of letters (the *Hurufis*) attach enormous importance to *the Alif*, the first letter of the alphabet, valued at one, for from it the principal names are derived. Letters, like language, are the attributes of the divine essence and are immanent in all things, for they are the materialisation of the Word, *Kalimat Allah*, and His creative discourse. The name, composed of letters, truly signifies the thing named and therefore reveals it (*kashf*). It is in man that this divine writing is consciously manifested, of which, moreover, he is a sign. Writing is a clear example of the mystery of being and a permanent representation of the highest activity of the Creator's pen, which is also expressed through the word, language, the name, and above all, through sound, which precedes them.

From this point of view, the study and reading of any sacred or truly esoteric text are by no means in vain; rather, such a text, by manifesting within itself and of itself the generative power, cannot fail to be – for those who open themselves to it – authentically transmuting and in fact constitute a gnosis. This is evident in the Hermetic Tradition, where the book is the vehicle par excellence.

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Matter as referred to by mainstream physics does not in truth exist. The world-machine remains in constant activity, alternately cooling or heating as it perpetually cycles through the four elements of which it is composed, each of which takes turns predominating over the others. The engine is fiery: indeed, it is the intensity of fire that melts the solid, liquefying it, and subsequently transforms these liquids into gases, which, through cooling, begin once again to condense and stabilise into solids.

Since Greco-Roman antiquity, this cycle of fire, air, water and earth has preoccupied philosophers and sages, who never regarded matter as something fixed and immutable, but rather as a set of elements in a state of constant change and restructuring. The unification of matter and energy—that is to say, the oneness of matter—has been a traditional alchemical axiom. The same has been true of the indissoluble unity of space and time, which is also present in the conceptions of archaic peoples.

It is only recently that science has begun to reconsider its dualistic and dichotomous—and, to top it all, mechanical—conception, with which it sought to judge beings and phenomena in a schizophrenic manner typical of the perspectives of modern metropolises. Thus, subatomic physics observes that particles exist and do not exist simultaneously, and that in truth the difference between inside and outside is merely a way of looking at things, in perfect agreement with traditional societies that view the universe as a man, animal or gigantic organism that is neither full nor empty. Things that seem opposite and incompatible are today regarded as different aspects of the same reality.

The space called the void contains all the virtual possibilities of any development and possesses an unlimited number of particles that arise and disappear spontaneously. Even motion and rest, existence and non-existence, force and energy, are regarded as phenomenal antagonisms that can only be understood through the notion of complementarity. Nor is there any difference between being and action. All manifestations of the world stem from the expression of a single reality that comes into being and then disintegrates, transforming into something else, which in turn changes into another, and so on indefinitely. The transience of objects, the ceaseless mutation of things and the flow of the river of existence are a living, tangible reality beyond any metaphor, which, moreover, explains the permanent illusion of historical man and his careful self-deception.

56 NOTE: ON MELANCHOLY

Passion, or heroic madness, fury—as Plato understood it and as the driving force of Knowledge, a source of inspiration and a means of the initiatory process—produces excellent results, governed by Mars, when it knows how to combine with the melancholic temperament and its bilious and dark expression attributed to the planet Saturn.

One must remember the true and symbolically elevated meaning of this latter

and the subtle energies it entails, beyond its negative aspects and the heavy burdens imposed upon it by ordinary superstitious interpretation, which is incapable of considering the different aspects of things and therefore of reconciling opposites. Saturn is also the slowness and wisdom of old age and the entry into a purifying state akin to death. The Renaissance held melancholy and the sadness with which it manifests in extraordinary high regard, and considered it a state in which inspiration flourished, the cradle of understanding and the antechamber of ecstasy. Great painters such as Dürer and the Flemish school of painting portrayed it and highlighted its connection with the metaphysical, the symbolic, the numerical and the esoteric.

This mood was attributed to heroes, poets and great men; and although it is difficult for those affected to tolerate when this state of mind arises, it is considered – as Agrippa attests – to generate a frenzy that leads to wisdom and revelation.

According to Alchemy, the ‘mixed ones’ are those initiates who have not yet completed their process and find themselves straddling the raw and the cooked, the cold and the heat, the profane and the sacred. It is safe to say that these aspirants to Knowledge have experienced this state first-hand and have had to endure the onslaught of sadness; of Saturn and melancholy. However, one must also recognise the beneficial aspects of these states—at times intolerable—which accompany the ‘mixed ones’ throughout the process of Knowledge, where they are highly significant and mark milestones and turning points on the path of life.

Let the student of this Agartha Programme, or Introduction to Sacred Science, take all this duly into account.

57 THE FOUR READINGS OF REALITY

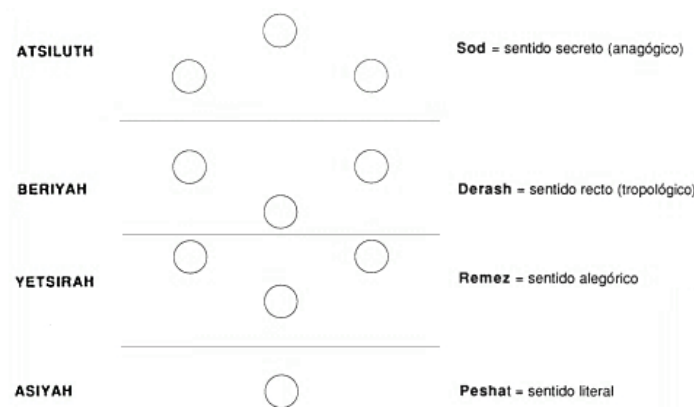
We have spoken of *En Sof* as the supra-cosmic or truly metaphysical in the highest and most radical etymological sense of the term. We wish here to indicate the connection between the first three numerations or *sefiroth* and the universal principles of being dealt with by ontology.

Also with the six *sefiroth* of cosmic construction assimilated to cosmogony (the plane or world of *Beriyah* and *Yetsirah*) and material or physical concretisation (the plane or world of *Asiyah*).

It is said in Theology that there are four ways of reading the Bible, or rather, four readings of its text (literal, allegorical, tropological, anagogical). Dante also explains this in the Prologue to *The Divine Comedy* (have you noticed this title?) referring to his own work which, as we know, includes a descent into hell, a purgatory and a subsequent ascent to heaven. This conception of the four readings of reality (or three equivalent to them according to other traditions) corresponds to the different planes of that reality and likewise to the hierarchical degrees of knowledge of it.

In Judaism, there are likewise four planes or levels of interpretation of the sacred texts, in perfect alignment with the model of the Tree of Life and the Theory of Emanations. They are inscribed from bottom to top, from

Asiyah to *Atsiluth*, which correspond to *Peshat*, *Remez*, *Derash* and *Sod*. *Peshat* is the literal meaning, *Remez* the allegorical. *Derash* is the straightforward meaning and *Sod* the secret meaning. It may be noted that the initial letters of these four terms, PRDS, form the word *PaRDeS*, which means Paradise or Garden, and refers to a place, or rather, an original state that can only be attained when the entire word is completed with the final letter (the final 'S'). It should be remembered that this letter 'S' corresponds to *Sod*, which translates as 'secret'.



58

ALCHEMY

Alchemy is sometimes expressed in complex and 'obscure' language and symbolism, and this is the case despite the efforts of our Programme, which seeks to synthesise, clarify and express in clear, contemporary language truths which, nevertheless, require a reformation of profane understanding in order to be grasped, which justifies, in certain circumstances, the use of this apparent obscurity or contradiction to drive personal efforts through a series of mental (and physical) exercises governed by the internal coherence of the symbols themselves and their logical yet supra-rational structure. Hence the importance of studying and meditating on the cosmogonic model in the first initiatory degree, striving to leave no gaps in its understanding, for it is an immediate springboard for integration into the ontological and metaphysical.

Time, upon which both patience and dedication act, is a great aid in alchemical-hermetic work, and in Kabbalah it is noted that the neophyte's work begins to mature when he starts to go grey, or when he passes the age of forty (or cycles), a number mentioned several times in the sacred texts. But above all, the intensity with which the apprentice approaches Knowledge must be emphasised; when this is firm, resolute and prudent, it will lead them to the threshold of a second Initiation, far more real and true, which is no longer merely speculative, theoretical or intellectual, but operative, practical and embodied.

In Chinese Alchemy there are also two initiations. The first

corresponds to the 'true man' (*Tchenn-jen*), the second to the 'transcendent man' (*Cheun-jen*). Access to the state of 'transcendent man' presupposes that of 'true man', which precedes it. The latter would be the being (ontology) attained through initiation, which in turn must dissolve into the infinity of non-being (metaphysics), that is, die and be reborn once more.

In the first stage, the apprentice must surrender themselves and turn away from the world of profane reading, and be reborn into symbolic reality. This rejection of the profane world entails a death (dissolution) and a rebirth in which the self takes shape (coagulation); that is to say, Knowledge.

Subsequently, that being must once again dissolve into a lucid ignorance and thus be able to generate an authentic new inner life born of the subtlest planes of consciousness and of a knowledge that is self-sufficient. That is, if the grace of God, increasing their thirst for knowledge, allows it. On the other hand, this is the dialectical and prototypical scheme of Alchemy. And these two basic operations of dissolution-coagulation are repeated many times over in the initiatory (or alchemical) process as small cycles revolving within larger cycles; and it is worth noting that the more they are repeated, the more they will benefit the aspirant, who must regard these phenomena as good omens when they occur.

Taoism (Far Eastern) is gentle and dissolving. The Chinese and their cultural descendants emphasise the metaphysical; conversely, the Mediterranean peoples and their sphere of influence (Western) place the emphasis on the ontological and cosmological. In this sense, these two traditions may be regarded as complementary in a process of inner realisation, and their teachings and methods may also be combined to great benefit. Yet both traditions address the two successive initiations to which we are referring. The student must investigate not only Western (mineral) Alchemy but also Chinese (vegetal) Alchemy.

In the Jewish (and Arabic) tradition, the 'true man' is Adam; there is mention of a primordial virginal garden, which corresponds to an original analogous state of consciousness; a state to which the neophyte may gain access through the first initiation. The transcendent man is represented by Enoch, taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire; he who is still alive and constitutes the historical prototype of all those who have realised Knowledge within themselves, that is to say, alchemical transmutation at its highest level. In Christianity, this distinction is that between John the Baptist and Jesus, and their different roles associated equally with the religious and the metaphysical; the former baptised with water, the latter with fire.

59

ANGEOLGY II

To speak of an angel is to speak of an image. Imagination should not be understood here as the faculty that produces the imaginary, the unreal, but rather as the act by which the world of Forms and Figures becomes real. The *mundus imaginalis* is situated in the mythical time of visionary perception and prophetic revelation.

As the 18th-century poet and painter William Blake said, 'He who cannot imagine more truly than his mortal eye can see, does not

imagines at all".

The image-maker (the name given to the devout follower of Islam) identifies with the inner light of beings and things in the Natural world and with the ideas and archetypes of the Ideal world.

This active imagination is a faculty of the Intellect or organ of Knowledge and leads to the Intelligence of the Heart, the object of direct inner Knowledge.

The archangels, as cognitive faculties that they are, are associated with these functions. Active imagination with the archangel Gabriel (the angel of the Holy Spirit), who in Christianity is the herald of the Incarnation of the Word; the intelligence of the heart, or pure intellect, with the archangel Michael (or *Christos-angelos*), whose name means 'equal to God'.

In the *Sephirotic Tree* of the Kabbalah, according to some traditional versions, Michael occupies the centre (*Tifereth*); Gabriel the Foundation (*Yesod*) and *Metatron* the pole or the crown (*Kether*). The latter is called the lesser YHVH and is the archangel who appeared to Moses amidst the burning bush. *Metatron* is the very word 'that opens the supercelestial realm'; he is the spirit of the vision that heralds a God who is to come; which, in general terms, applies to any immaterial and luminous energy, that is to say, angelic energy.



[fig. 38](#)

60 MINUTE

To be poor, in truth, is to fear poverty, or to desire to possess, whatever means one may have. Likewise, to be rich is not to covet what one does not have; which is the same as being at peace with—and not resigned to—what one is, whatever one may be or possess.

In truth, the more one knows, the more one forgets what has been learnt. God is perpetual novelty. The possession of the personal psyche is the clearest expression

of the error of perceiving ourselves as individuals. In divinity there is neither loneliness nor fear.

61 NOTE:

In Module II, section 50, we discussed nutrition. Without disregarding anything stated there, we shall now also address certain related topics and the errors that may arise from them, to the extent that they can become—at times—insurmountable obstacles on the path to Knowledge. Two clear examples are the ‘naturalist’ prejudice and the materialist impediment. The latter is closely linked to the view that modern man holds of himself and of all things, and corresponds, in general terms, to the outlook of contemporary society, which is also associated with the literal and programmed interpretation that this historical man has of the cosmos. The first, that is to say, the ‘naturalist’ prejudice, is characteristic of certain individuals and groups who seek to ‘improve’ their individual situation amidst the chaos in which we find ourselves living. It is to this that we shall now refer, for many of those interested in the subjects of Metaphysics and authentic Knowledge—that is, those who harbour an inner restlessness—are often tempted by certain attractions offered by a ‘purer’, ‘more natural’ and ‘healthier’ life.

One should ask, from the outset, what is meant by what is today called ‘natural’ and what concept of nature is currently held.

It is well known that for traditional and primitive societies—which, incidentally, are those that live in harmony with the cosmos and pulse in tune with natural rhythms and cycles—on a perfectly universal – and ecological – level, nature is not what modern people assume it to be, namely: the surface of the landscape or hypothetical issues linked to ‘health’, about which one might also ask: what is meant by this?

On the other hand, certain specific foods are considered ‘good’ or ‘bad’ according to certain guidelines that arbitrarily make ‘natural’ their motto and ‘health’ their ‘ideal’, in a veritable moral and fanatical crusade, without possessing the necessary basic knowledge for this and without being informed about the history and culture of the various peoples who have always inhabited the world. It is very important to emphasise that in no sacred text of the various traditions is diet treated as a fundamental theme, and generally it is not even mentioned, neither as a prerequisite for attaining certain states of consciousness, nor even for genuine physical health; rather, in certain sacred books, such as the Christian Gospel, it is made clear that what matters is not what enters the mouth, but what comes out of the heart of man.

A widely publicised example is the vegetarian movement. In fact, no tradition—Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, Taoist, etc.—except the Hindu tradition, practises vegetarianism, which its followers have turned into a cult to which they are devoted in an almost moralistic manner. Certainly, vegetables are very good, as are all the things that God has made available to man; but the exclusion of some to

favour of others, as if some were ‘good’ and others ‘bad’, makes this one-sided view all too similar to desacralised or profane civilisations rather than authentic traditional doctrines.

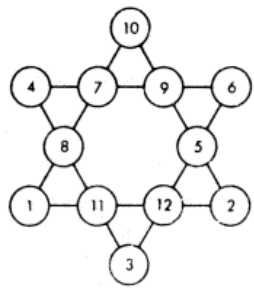
Especially when one falls into the extremes of believing and trying to impose at all costs the idea that only raw vegetables and fruit are genuinely healthy foods—an assessment that is in no way verifiable if one were to follow a prolonged diet of this nature, with the discomforts and inconveniences it entails. In this sense, certain practices and concepts of Hindu origin, as well as others derived from Hatha Yoga—typical of simple fakirs who seek to pass off their activities as authentic spirituality—are taken literally and lived out in a pseudo-mystical and fanatical manner, both in the West and in the East, and indeed within modern India itself, where numerous sects of unclear origin and syncretic thought, heavily influenced also by modern culture, preach certain ‘teachings’ (even in the sacred cities on the banks of the Ganges) which have followers in every country of Europe and America; these teachings constitute serious obstacles to the attainment of Knowledge when such sermons and exercises are taken in a strictly literal sense.

We believe that the ‘natural’ must be transcended in order to make way for the supernatural.

62

KABBALAH

Below we offer a simple numerical ‘talisman’ (remember that numbers are also letters) based on the Star of David or Seal of Solomon, the emblem of Israel.



You will notice that the sum of the six rows of numbers gives the same result:

$4 + 7 + 9 + 6 = 26$	$6 + 5 + 12 + 3 = 26$
$1 + 11 + 12 + 2 = 26$	$4 + 8 + 11 + 3 = 26$
$1 + 8 + 7 + 10 = 26$	$10 + 9 + 5 + 2 = 26$

Similarly, the sum of the numbers placed at the points of the Star is 26 (13 for the two ends of the vertical axis and 13 for the remaining four).

This number, as we know, is particularly significant in Hebrew Kabbalah – and in other traditions – and corresponds to the sum of the letters of the Supreme Sacred Name YHVH, broken down as follows:

$$Y = 10, H = 5, V = 6, H = 5. \text{ Total} = 26$$

Furthermore, the sum of the inner hexagon is 52 (26×2), which, when added to the 26 outer numbers, gives 78 (26×3) as the total of all the numbers in the figure. We should note that this is the number of cards in a complete Tarot deck.

63

GEOMANCY

We have retained the name Geomancy, by which this science is commonly known, although strictly speaking it should be called Geology, the term by which modern man designates a discipline that emerged in the last century. In Chinese it is called *Feng-Shui* and studies the energies of nature, in their intimate relationship with the earth, and indeed this science is closely linked to Sacred Geography. In reality, all traditional peoples and societies have used geomancy to situate their cities, temples or places of worship, as well as their dwellings, in specific locations and key points.

For a traditional mindset, both the earth and the sky are very much alive and constantly express themselves through the energies that continually shape them. The earth breathes, pulsates, glows, and takes on different forms in various places, marked by different phenomena (mountains, valleys, plains, rivers, waterfalls, etc.), which are symbols of archetypal ideas, or rather, of ‘other things’ that also exist in the invisible, spiritual world. Certainly, these conceptions must be placed in direct connection with the idea of the analogy between macrocosm and microcosm, which sees the earth as a living, sentient and gigantic being, a natural expression, like man, of a Supreme Being, hidden within his own creation. This is why cosmic energies, and in this particular case telluric energies, are also the channels through which divinity manifests itself and therefore indicate specific points of communication between earth and sky. This circulation of energy, in both directions, is what equally characterises Geomancy as a divination art and which, through it, seeks the appropriate place for the human being within the indeterminate and amorphous, establishing order out of chaos. One of the secondary variants of this science (or art) is the figure of *the Zahorí*, who is responsible for finding water, or currents of beneficial (usable) energies, using a divining rod or a pendulum for this purpose.



[fig. 39](#)



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Some people with a purely secular education might well be surprised to learn of the existence of a 'Perennial Philosophy'—that is, an ordered body of interrelated knowledge, a doctrine (never a dogma), capable of explaining to humankind its own nature and that of the world in which it lives. Of course, this universal 'panacea', which would answer all questions, soothe the anxieties of the modern world and eliminate the suffering caused by ignorance, could not be an individual creation (let alone a 'collective' one), but is rather the expression of a direct spiritual revelation, attained by different people in various places, which takes on different forms of its own and which, above all, is present in the very core of the human being and of the cosmos in which they dwell. Therefore, the revelation of this archetypal knowledge is not merely horizontal and historical, but fundamentally vertical and eternal, just as are the 'ideas'—the principles that shape the world and manifest themselves through universal laws that have been universally recognised by the various traditions that have shaped the history of humanity across the breadth and length of its geography. This simple observation, which any reader of good will can verify for themselves, implies the idea of a universal model, of a set of immutable structures, visible and invisible, without which the world and humankind would not exist. Hence the importance of understanding cosmogony as a symbolic expression of Universal Intelligence, the energy underlying every manifestation, just as thought precedes the word. Indeed, this interplay of essential structures is expressed symbolically, and it is through these symbols and their analogies and equivalences that we can understand the ultimate reality of the cosmos and its final instance: its uncreated yet ever-active nature. This legacy, inherited from the great traditions of antiquity, is an authentic archetypal cosmogony which, as such, corresponds to the various archaic symbolisms through which it is expressed, thereby re-actualising the reality of the present world—a world which, though still bereft of all true knowledge, continues to constitute an authentic theophany for all those capable of understanding it. It goes without saying, then, that devoting oneself to the study of the traditional disciplines and carrying out their practices with the aim of awakening the dormant powers of the soul constitutes an appropriate method for Knowledge.

Sacred Science proposes a total transformation of our ordinary way of being and a persistent quest for other, more subtle states to which we must arrive. The adventure of Knowledge, as we have seen, is represented as a journey or a pilgrimage towards the Centre of Being, towards the Holy City, that is, towards our own inner self. That journey, full of vicissitudes and dangers, allows us to 'pass', gradually, into other, more inner regions, and each of those 'steps' entails an increasingly clear 'remembrance' of the Self, of the true identity that remains immovable in the midst of our own heart. In fact, every sacred symbol

, by virtue of its role as a vehicle, implies the possibility of a ‘passage’, for it has the capacity to transport man from the material reality perceived by the senses towards the inner truth hidden behind the outward appearance of things and beings. The symbol touches the senses, allowing us, through that sensory perception, to rise via it towards the invisible realms it represents, thereby enabling the ‘passage’ to other states and levels of consciousness and life.

The perpetual ascent and descent that the Being makes through the spheres of the *Sephiroth* Tree involves a ‘passage’ along the pathways that connect the various *sephiroth* with one another; according to Kabbalah, there are 22 paths that we must traverse (see Module II, [25](#)), each of which is associated with a letter of the sacred alphabet and with a card from the Major Arcana of the Tarot.

There are certain symbols, which we wish to highlight here, that refer specifically to these ‘passages’ which must occur during the process of accomplishing the Great Work. These—such as the Octagon, the Gate, the crossing of the waters, and the Ladder—can show us how to undertake these journeys through the realms of the universal mind. Thoughts, growing ever more subtle, guided by these archetypal paths, will lead us through ever narrower passages that will ultimately lead to *En Sof*, the boundless nothingness in which there is only eternal repose. ‘Through Me you shall know the Father’.

66

ARCHAIC TRADITIONS

Here and there, in various parts of the world, coexisting with modern civilisation, one may encounter different groups who still live practically in the ‘Stone Age’ or the ‘Bronze Age’, according to the vocabulary (jargon) of modern ‘science’. These peoples, who still preserve more or less complete fragments of their original traditions and live in accordance with them, are termed ‘primitive’ by official science, as it fails to grasp the meaning of their customs and rites and is unable to comprehend the traditional mindset that sees in nature an image of the supernatural and in the world and man a series of invisible energies that constantly determine them; consequently, it has been assumed that these beings, who are regarded as completely lacking in intelligence, as stupid, or at best as children unable to escape their supposed ignorance, constitute an almost distinct species, akin to humanoids, very close to apes, existing before man could have become such thanks to the advances and progress brought about by science.

It goes without saying that a researcher of archaic traditions who is a sceptic regarding metaphysics and regards the animate presence of the deity as something frivolous will never be able to understand that archaic world, and the same applies to those who hold an exclusively religious or moral conception of God. All too often, these two types of scholars are the ones who handle official information, without realising themselves that without an intimate experience of the sacred, it is almost impossible to grasp what a traditional mindset entails. A person who denies the invisible or spiritual plane will see in symbols only utilitarian elements of a literal nature; on the other hand, a religious-moral individual will wish to see only what

is 'inferior' to their beliefs, which they will dismiss as rubbish, or they will arrogate to themselves the right to condone barbarism, or what they assume to be ignorant and superstitious paganism, including the ancient Greek initiatory rites of Eleusis and the 'oracles' of Delphi and that of Zeus at Dodona in Epirus.

In truth, this sort of criterion might be better applied to the inhabitants of large cities, who, according to the programming of the contemporary world, appear merely as automatons, effectively slaves to their cultural conditioning inflicted by the false religion of 'science', which amounts to definitively institutionalising ignorance.

Great civilisations are in reality a degradation of traditional thought, where, paradoxically, it reaches its greatest brilliance before being buried by its own cycle. Conversely, certain archaic peoples still retain the 'naivety' and freshness of their origins. We should, in that case, ask ourselves who the 'ignorant' or the 'primitive' ones are, and what authority the modern world can claim regarding any classification in every branch of its 'science'. The 'official' representatives of modern thought know nothing, and sometimes there are those who take their own ignorance – which should put them to shame – as a step forward towards a new world of which, through their incapacity – institutionalised as an objective scientific stance – they were the pioneering builders.

67

ASTRONOMY-ASTROLOGY

Astronomy is the oldest of all the sciences, and it is this that determines the origins of a civilisation, as it has done with all those of antiquity. Indeed, the study of the cycles and rhythms of the stars generates the patterns upon which religious, political and economic thought—indeed, the entire culture of a society—will be founded. From this, it is possible to draw specific conclusions, based on calculations, relationships and analogies, which correspond to a repetitive and cyclical concept of time. This gives rise to predictions about cyclical—and therefore recurring—events, which are studied by astrology, or judicial astronomy (as it was called in antiquity).

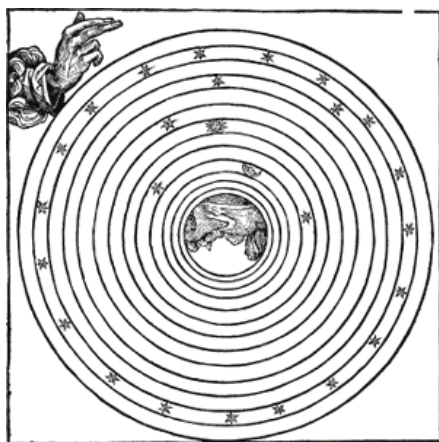
The shortest and easiest cycle to observe is the lunar cycle, which completes a full orbit and returns to the same point in 29 days and a fraction (28 days according to ancient thinking, divided into four weeks of seven days). This is without taking into account the sun's daily path, that is, the difference between day and night. The moon also lent itself to the study of longer cycles, namely those of its eclipses, which, as the Chaldeans observed, occurred in the same order after 223 lunar months. The most important of these major celestial cycles is that of the precession of the equinoxes, which repeats every 25,920 years (26,000 in 'round' numbers), established for Western culture by Hipparchus of Nicaea and other traditional scholars. The celestial vault, or firmament, is a hemisphere whose line of contact with the earth is the horizon, and whose centre lies in the observer's eye. If the observer moves, the horizon shifts. Similarly, when the observer looks at a celestial body, the line of sight or visual ray extending to the centre of the body determines a point on the celestial vault, which is the projection of the body onto it; and since the distance from the Earth to the various celestial bodies is immense (remember that the distance separating our planet from the Sun is 150 million km),

relation to the Earth's diameter (6,378 km), it is assumed that the celestial bodies move within an ideal sphere of indefinite radius, known as the celestial sphere, the centre of which is likewise located in the observer's eye.

In reality, what the observer sees are the projections of the celestial bodies onto the firmament and not their actual movements. Furthermore, the Earth is regarded as a point coinciding with the centre of this celestial sphere. Thus, it can be verified that even modern astronomy still maintains and proceeds from the geocentric—or rather, anthropocentric—point of view to construct all its speculations—and it could not be otherwise—despite the fact that ignorance and general popularisation place a pompous and pretentious emphasis on heliocentrism (perfectly known in antiquity, as can be seen in the primary role unanimously assigned to the sun) as a scientific conquest prior to which nothing was known of astronomy. That is to say, those who rejected Nicolaus Copernicus (author of *De Revolutionibus*, published in 1543, in which he upheld heliocentrism, based precisely on ancient astrology) are the very same ignorant people who emphatically assert his system as official today, without understanding it, and without even realising that modern astronomy is grounded in the Earth and humankind, and at no point adopts a perspective external to them, which would, incidentally, be utterly absurd and impossible. A geocentric or anthropocentric description of the Earth is just as valid (compared to the heliocentric one), and in practice modern astronomy continues to use it; the same has happened with regard to Einstein and the phenomenon of light. However, such is the confusion of the modern world and our contemporary 'scientists' that their aberrations and anomalies—now computerised—are predictable, fuelled by the same bad faith and hatred that led to the banning of Copernicus's work, –and shortly afterwards to Giordano Bruno being burned at the stake and Galileo being forced to recant–, one of the hermetic and esoteric sages of the so-called Renaissance in relation to the cultures of Antiquity.

Note: Although the keys to the ancient astrological sciences seem to have been lost, the fragments bequeathed to us allow for speculation and, in many cases, astonish us with the accuracy of their interpretations when applied to the everyday realities of existence.

In any case, it should be made clear that Astrology (derived from Astronomy) is a perfectly valid symbolic system, like any other, for attempting to describe and 'grasp' the ever-multifaceted and multidimensional 'reality'. A classificatory system of concepts inspired by the cyclical and rhythmic movements of the heavens and their decisive influences on the world and humankind. Such a science, studied in the light of the Hermetic Tradition, is yet another instrument in the quest for Knowledge.



[fig. 40](#)

68

THE TRADITIONS

Throughout our Programme, we have frequently referred to many traditions, both those still alive today and those that have already disappeared. And we have always emphasised the fact that these traditions share a common identity in terms of their main symbols, rites and myths, for they all stem from a single, unique Tradition, called primordial precisely because of its essentially vertical and supra-historical nature, which has enabled it to remain untouched by the changes of cyclical becoming, fully preserving the Knowledge (*Gnosis*) and the permanent, salvific possibility of being embodied by man of any time and place. This also applies to our own age, in which, despite its extreme darkness, certain traditional cultures that have not lost their link with the Primordial Tradition still survive in various parts of the Earth, providing the spiritual and intellectual influence essential for embarking on the path that leads us to inner realisation and identity with the Self.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that all current traditions suffer, to a greater or lesser extent, from a degradation in relation to their original values, although this degradation affects rather the external form in which they are necessarily clothed (and which is not unrelated to spatio-temporal conditions), but not their substance, their core and metaphysical essence revealed through their symbolic codes.

— On the one hand, we have the three Abrahamic traditions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, also known as the ‘traditions of the Book’: the Bible for the first two and the Qur’an for the third. It so happens that in these traditions the religious or exoteric aspect has long prevailed over their esotericism (the Kabbalah for Judaism and Sufism for Islam), which is practically unknown to the vast majority of their practitioners, who are attached

to the letter but not to the spirit of their tradition. Nevertheless, within these traditions there still exist small groups or individuals who continue to transmit the teachings of true esotericism to those who seek it with a sincere heart.

– Of all existing traditions, the Hindu tradition is perhaps the one that most completely preserves the metaphysical doctrine, expressed primarily through the Vedas and the Upanishads, which, like all sacred books and texts, are directly inspired by the gods; that is to say, their origin is non-human.

– Buddhism in its two main forms: Hinayana (or ‘small vehicle’) and Mahayana (or ‘great vehicle’). It is in the latter that the Buddha’s teachings have been preserved with the greatest purity; this is the form that entered Tibet from India, where it incorporated elements of indigenous traditions, giving rise to Lamaism. Today, Lamaist Buddhism is not only widespread in the East, but also in various cities across Europe and America.

– Taoism stems from the ancient Chinese or Far Eastern tradition, of which it constitutes the most authentically metaphysical and cosmogonic aspect, noting that there is also a Taoist alchemy (just as there is a Hindu alchemy) with many points in common with Western alchemy. In China itself, Zen, or Zen Buddhism, emerged, born of the synthesis between Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism. Today, the Zen school is rooted primarily in Japan, a country which, on the other hand, continues to preserve its ancient tradition, *Shinto*, with characteristics very similar to Chinese Confucianism.

– We must also consider the presence of the great pre-Columbian tradition, still alive, albeit in a fragmentary form, throughout the Americas, as well as note the existence of Hindu Jainism and the Zoroastrian Parsis, not forgetting the numerous ‘primitive’ peoples of Africa and Oceania, who broadly speaking constitute all those magical-religious cultures included in what is understood—or rather, misunderstood—as ‘shamanism’.

– But it is particularly in the Hermetic Tradition that we place our emphasis, since this synthesis, which is characteristic of Western peoples – and the most appropriate for them – is by no means a syncretism simply because it has multiple origins (just as the tradition of the Greeks and Romans, born of Egyptian-Chaldean and Indo-European thought, cannot be considered as such; nor can Islam, which is directly linked to Israel and Christianity, or Buddhism, which emanated from Hinduism, etc.) but a living tradition, which can even be traced historically throughout the formation of Europe and America, and which has produced countless adherents to the Art: alchemists, astrologers, artists and philosophers, who

nurtured and shaped the life of the West, creating institutions which, as in the case of Freemasonry, safeguard the content of the Unanimous Tradition.

69

THE GATE

"It had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and at the twelve gates twelve angels, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel: on the east side three gates; on the north side three gates; on the south side three gates; and on the west side three gates" (Revelation 21:12–13).

The gradual awakening of consciousness can be visualised as the opening of gates that allows thought to 'pass' into other regions and enables the adept to come to know the invisible degrees of being. A gate always implies both an exit and an entrance, for when we pass through it we leave one mental space to enter another; and there are several that we must cross, each increasingly narrow, during the process of transmutation. Initiation into the Mysteries opens the gate that separates the ordinary, profane world from that other sacred realm where space and time regain their true meaning.

We have already referred to the Door within architectural symbolism and now wish to make certain observations regarding the 'passage' that this symbol evokes. We have viewed the temple as a model of the cosmos and as a symbol of man's inner space. Its outer door serves as a separation – and at the same time as a point of union – between the atrium – where the multiplicity and chaos of the ordinary world prevail – and the inner space in which the order and harmony of the sacred and meaningful reign. The initiate, thanks to the rituals that qualify him to enter, crosses that threshold, dying to the lower and outer states and being reborn into an inner life in which higher possibilities awaken.

This Initiation, or gateway to the invisible worlds, is represented in the *Sephiroth* Tree by sphere 9, which in turn relates to card number 12 of the Major Arcana of the Tarot. It is interesting to note the connection we can draw between this sphere – *Yesod*, the Foundation – and the Christian symbol of Peter (who was crucified upside down, as in the position of 'The Hanged Man'), who is the foundation stone upon which the Church is built. In this sense, it is no coincidence that it is Peter himself who is the bearer of the keys – or clues – that open the gates of the kingdom of heaven.

Furthermore, this first door is also related to the symbol of the cave, and in both cases the initiate, once they have entered the inner space, must pass through the labyrinth that will ultimately lead them – if they do not get lost – to the centre or heart of the temple where the altar is located. In Christian symbolism, we see how in this central space (housing the chalice or cup, the empty space or receptacle of the *Shekhinah*), there is also another small door that only the priest can open and which conceals the mystery from profane eyes. This door is located in *Tifereth* – the central *sefirah*

that we must pass through, emerging from above, to begin to glimpse the hidden reality upon ‘the surface of the waters’.

Having received the baptism of water that opens the first gate, and having completed the horizontal, labyrinthine journey between that outer gate and its centre or heart—where the baptism of fire is received—the adept must embark upon an axial, vertical, and ascending ‘passage’ along the invisible axis connecting the altar to the central point of the dome—from *Tifereth* to *Kether*. The ‘primitive’ rites of climbing the tree, or ascending the ritual pole, exemplify this ascent, at the end of which the adept must pass through the narrowest gate, symbolically situated at the very summit of the temple. This is the eye of the needle through which no individual wealth can pass. The needle, in fact, is yet another symbol of the axis, and the rite of threading the needle thus becomes a representation of this ‘passage’ through the narrow gate.

Man, in his quest for Knowledge, must first leave the ordinary world to enter the interior of the temple; then he must lose himself in the labyrinths only to find himself again upon reaching the centre; from there he must undertake the vertical ascent in search of the summit, and finally he must exit through the zenithal door of the temple, or cosmos, towards the supra-cosmic. This final exit is visualised as the undoing or dissolving of the knot that binds us to individuality and to a particular state of being, and its attainment constitutes an absolute fusion with the whole. ‘Knock and it shall be opened unto you’.

70

THE SYMBOL OF THE HEART II

The seat of many traditions of courage, of the spirit (soul) and of creative Intelligence, analogous within the human being to the Sun in the macrocosm; light and life spring from it as from a single source, in the image of the origin: “Light and life, that is the God and Father (*Nous*) from whom Man was born. If, then, you learn to know yourself as made of life and light, and that these are the elements that constitute you, you will be born again.” (*Poimandres* I, 21).

One cannot love what one does not know, and not all forms of union are a true reflection of Love.

Small though it is, since it is the centre of the microcosm, it synthesises the horizontal quaternary on the vertical axis and diffuses into the structure the Non-being of the microcosm itself, its supra-cosmic identity, which it reflects directly along the vertical axis and which the being comes to know through its own sacrifice (Eye of the Heart).

It is the true Divine City, where the authentic, unconditioned Subject of all Knowledge resides precisely; within it lies the seed whose development brings to fruition the planes symbolised by the diagram of the Tree of Life, for it is the true *athanor* that absorbs the inferior and manifests the superior; since there is no manifestation without a centre, nor anything that lacks an origin. The development of this embryo or seed, through the various phases of the Work, always attains in the heart an actualisation, a realisation or birth, for there are also four interpretations of it, from the physical organ to the sanctuary where the

union of the created and the uncreated. It is the sacrificial altar and the oblation or offering.

The Centre of the World is the banquet of the Self from which all may partake without it ever running dry; for this reason, it has been symbolised by a Table at which gods and men sit, whether in celebration of a regenerated heaven (Giordano Bruno: *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*), or that of a hierogamic marriage (the Wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia, when, according to Greek tradition, they shared the agape feast for the last time with humans); or by the Round Table at the centre of which lies the Grail, or Solomon's Table in the 12th-century Hermetic Toledo, according to legend studded with precious stones symbolising the Zodiac.

It is also the pure earth, once the ignorance that, through cyclical degradation, covers the site of the hierophanies has been dissolved; these always occur at a 'centre of the world', inaugurating, if necessary, a space or a time to which they confer that characteristic.

This heart, which is the receptacle of the vertical-spiritual, whose influence radiates horizontally, thus acting as an intermediary through its central space—which the Ether symbolises—is also the vessel kept in the sanctuary of the temple, a structure analogous to the latter, whose lid corresponds to the vault or roof and which contains the food or liquor of immortality, the fruit of *the athanor* to which one has arrived through the void, the effective reality of a state of being that transcends the structure and which can be known through the opening of the 'sense of eternity' and its full development, even though the individuality of man is crucified in the quaternary.

Due to its concentric symbolism, which likewise corresponds to the perfect synthesis of Creation, within it lies the divine Presence or Immanence, which is the true Centre of all things and which contains them all without being contained by them: this is thus the authentic Master, with whom the initiate identifies as he progresses in the realisation of his true Self.

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As we mentioned in the section ‘The Four Ages’ (No. 2 of this Module), a *Kalpa* represents the cycle of existence of a universe or world, born from the breath of *Brahma*, the creator deity. There is no cycle longer than the *Kalpa*, for it contains all possible cycles of cycles, bound together by that breath which sustains them and gives them life. We might add that when a *Kalpa* comes to an end, a *Pralaya* occurs—the dissolution or reabsorption of that world into the bosom of *Brahma*, into the unmanifest. In this regard, we read in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the sacred text of India: “At the end of a *Kalpa*, a period of creative activity, beings and things return to Me.” The *Kalpa* is a day of *Brahma*, and the *Pralaya* a night; at the end of which a new *Kalpa* appears, and so on indefinitely, forming what is called the ‘chain of worlds’. Each *Kalpa* contains 14 *Manvantaras*, and each *Manvantara* represents the complete cycle of a humanity, which in turn is subdivided into four *yugas* or ages, each of unequal duration. Our *Manvantara* is the seventh in that series, and there are still seven more to go before the current *Kalpa* ends. In short, the word *Manvantara* means ‘age of Manu’, who is none other than the universal Lawgiver or cosmic Intelligence who, in accordance with the Eternal Wisdom, promulgates the Law or Dharma that governs the entire *Manvantara* from its beginning to its end.

It is said that the Dharma, symbolised by a bull in the Hindu tradition, stands on all four legs during the *Satya-Yuga* or Golden Age, which means that it manifests in its entirety, signifying that humanity as a whole lived in perfect harmony and unity with its Principle. Let us recall in this regard that *Satya-Yuga* means ‘Age of Being’ or ‘Age of Truth’. We find the same root *Sat* in Saturn, the ruler of the Golden Age in the Greco-Latin tradition (and curiously, the second part of this name is identical to the word *ûrnâ*, the pearl on Shiva’s forehead which symbolises the ‘sense of eternity’, or the ‘eternal present’). By analogy between the metaphysical and the corporeal order, that same sense of totality is expressed in the temporal duration of that *Yuga*, estimated, as we know, at 25,920 years, which is a full cycle of the precession of the equinoxes, or, in other words, 12 ‘zodiacal eras’ of

2,160 years each ($12 \times 2,160 = 25,920$). Conversely, during the *Trêtâ-Yuga*, or Silver Age, instability and a gradual spiritual decline take hold of the world, for the bull of Dharma stands on three legs (*Trêtâ* = three). This results in a shortening of the duration of that Age: 19,440 years, that is, one third of the precession of the equinoxes, or, in other words, 9 ‘zodiacal eras’ ($9 \times 2,160 = 19,440$). In the *Dwâpara-Yuga* or Bronze Age, the bull stands on only two legs (*Dwâpara* = two), implying that Dharma is understood only in part. This Age corresponds precisely to a duration that is half the precession of the equinoxes: 12,960 years, or 6 ‘zodiacal ages’ ($6 \times 2,160 = 12,960$). And finally, in the *Kali-Yuga* or Iron Age, the bull of Dharma now stands on a single leg, thus symbolising the great imbalance that characterises the last age of the *Manvantara*, and very particularly its final phases. The duration of this Age is a quarter of the precession of the equinoxes: 6,480 years, or 3 ‘zodiacal eras’ ($3 \times 2,160 = 6,480$). *Kali-Yuga* means ‘Dark Age’, which began more than six thousand years ago, meaning that

it is about to come to an end, and with it that of the entire *Manvantara*. According to the data of Sacred Science, this Age began with the entry into the ‘zodiacal era’ of Taurus, around 4450 BC.

72

THE END OF TIME

Any neutral observer can currently observe certain global symptoms such as earthquakes, droughts, plagues, wars, catastrophes, social degeneration, overpopulation, violence and injustice, on a scale never before witnessed by humanity. These clear signs of the end of a cycle, foretold in minute detail by the Judeo-Christian scriptures, have also been described in a vast array of documents by Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, pre-Columbian, Greco-Roman, Hermetic and other traditions.

It would seem that all these calamities will be resolved by fire – by a merciful bolt of lightning – and that this element will bring about the regeneration of this humanity, which will perish entirely and return to the mist from whence it came, to make way for another, born of its ashes and seeds, which will be reborn into a new world and a Golden Age, thanks to the efforts – and the blood – of initiates and adepts, who will make the continuity of creation possible. Of course, contemporary ignorance publicly and officially scorns this fact, which it denies and ignores – the scriptures say that men will be taken unawares whilst going about their business and lies – even though in private some are moved by it, though they tend towards literal and physical images, and many even plan to ‘save themselves’ in a sort of material Noah’s Ark.

This latter ‘naivety’ or, rather, illusion, is as serious as the other, and those who ‘believe’ in it – when it is said that there will be not only a new earth, but a new heaven – will be equally excluded from the world to come.

The death of a civilisation is analogous to that of the individual being, and the latter can take nothing material with them to the other world. However, man will be resurrected in a body of glory if he is capable of attaining Knowledge, of attaining Being, and of reabsorbing himself into Time to gain Eternity, which constitutes the true spirituality that the initiate seeks in life. And undoubtedly this glorious body, or rather, this ‘entity’, can likewise be realised collectively.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that in the infinite harmony of all things, where everything is counted, weighed and measured, the end of a cycle and its inhabitants is intimately linked to the beginning of another and the birth of a new humanity, which has nothing to do with this one, which, obviously, cannot survive due to the very dynamics of its multiplication.

73

MARSILIO FICINO

When, in 1450, Cosimo de’ Medici entrusted the still very young Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) with the task of founding the Platonic Academy of Florence, a fundamental step was being taken towards what was to become a new

the resurgence of the Hermetic Tradition, following the relative decline that had set in since the end of the Middle Ages. To identify the factors that made the establishment of this Academy possible (which became the most important intellectual centre of the era), we must go back to the year 1439 when, on the occasion of a council, scholars from various countries and religions gathered in Florence, including Byzantine Neoplatonic philosophers. The latter brought with them all the Hermetic and Platonic knowledge preserved intact in the city of Byzantium (formerly Constantinople) since Alexandrian times, and which had only been partially disseminated throughout the medieval West. Among these philosophers, it was Gemistus Plethon who would exert the most direct influence on the Platonic Academy, for through his mediation Marsilio Ficino and his esoteric circle would translate from the Greek all the books of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (in the Middle Ages only the *Asclepius* was known in its Latin version), the ‘Chaldean Oracles’, and the works of Plato, Proclus, Iamblichus, Plotinus, Dionysius the Areopagite, Porphyry and Synesius, to name but a few. It should be noted that for Ficino, translating is above all a way of transmitting tradition, bearing in mind, moreover, that these three words – to translate, to transmit and tradition – refer to the same reality, since they all derive from the same etymological root. In this sense, it is worth recalling that the very symbolic knowledge transmitted by traditional cultures is a translation into human language and understanding of eternal truths and archetypes. Thus, by translating, commenting on and writing prefaces to the works of ancient wisdom, Ficino becomes a faithful interpreter of it. In the prologue he wrote to the *Poimandres*, Ficino establishes the mythical and spiritual genealogy which, like a golden chain, the ‘golden chain’, unifies across time and space the illustrious family of Hermetic philosophers, ‘whose origin lies in Mercury and whose zenith in Plato’. Let us recall a paragraph from that preface: “At the time when Moses was born, the astronomer Atlas flourished, brother of the physicist Prometheus (a relationship that undoubtedly refers to the single origin of heaven and earth), maternal grandfather of the ancient Mercury, whose grandson was Mercury Trismegistus, the greatest of priests and kings”. To this king-priest we owe the teaching “of Orpheus, who revealed the mysteries to Aglaophon, succeeded by Pythagoras, who had as his disciple Philolaus, Plato’s teacher”. Considering himself as yet another link in that chain, Ficino produced a work of his own that would perpetuate the memory of the ‘divine and heroic race’, ‘mistress of the centuries’, adapting it to the circumstances of his time.

Given the profound mark they left on Renaissance art and Hermetic philosophy, two works in particular deserve mention: **Platonic Theology** and **On the Christian Religion**, in which the universality of a thought system is evident—one capable of combining the mysteries of Platonic cosmology and metaphysics with those of Christian revelation, a synthesis already foreshadowed by the early Church Fathers and their medieval successors, and likewise by Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), the ‘Doctor of *Learned Ignorance*’, who was to exert such a great influence on Ficino himself and on his disciple Pico della Mirandola, and through them on all the Renaissance Neoplatonists. On the other hand, the esotericism championed by Ficino can be seen as a reaction against Aristotelian ‘scholasticism’, which, in its decline, was incubating the seeds of what would, centuries later, give rise to Cartesian rationalism.

In the words of his disciple Policiano, Ficino was "a new Orpheus who rescued the Platonic Eurydice from the underworld". Indeed, the core around which this work was built were the Orphic hymns, in which the master discovers, veiled beneath the evocative language of poetry, the most sublime secrets; for, as Dionysius the Areopagite affirmed, "the divine ray cannot reach us unless it is covered by poetic veils". These veils are the gods themselves, or rather, the emanations they manifest to man through the messenger Muses – daughters of Zeus and Memory – and through the Graces. Ficino, like Pico della Mirandola, maintained that the gods of the Orphic pantheon were 'composite' or 'hybrid' gods, endowed with the power of mutability, thereby assuming all forms. But this mutability is made possible by the self-sacrifice of the Being, which, by fragmenting and dividing itself, gives rise to the cosmogonic order, governed by the gods themselves. On the other hand, the idea that a god contains his opposite, or that he needs his opposite to express the full range of his attributes, is by no means strange to a Renaissance magician such as Ficino, for whom the universe is a structure woven by the constant relationships, tensions and struggles between opposing energies which, nevertheless, perpetually balance and harmonise, drawn by the force of Love, inseparable from Beauty, the gateway through which one attains identity with Knowledge and Wisdom.

In his treatise **De Amore** (a commentary on Plato's **Symposium**), Ficino wrote: "All the gods are bound to one another by a kind of mutual charity, in such a way that it may justly be said that love is the knot and permanent bond of the universe". Note how this conception corresponds with that set out by Kabbalistic doctrine, for it is in *Tifereth* (Love or Beauty), as the central heart of the Tree of Life, that all the *Sefirotic* oppositions find their balance. In the same vein, one should consider what Christianity itself has to say on the matter, for which charity, or love, stands at the pinnacle of the theological virtues, which, as such, belong to the realm of ontology, above which lies only metaphysics. It is no coincidence, then, that among the Renaissance Neoplatonists there persisted a secret connection that linked back to the initiatory teachings of the medieval 'Fieles de Amor'. Furthermore, depicting the deity of love as blind or blindfolded (for example, the Cupid in Botticelli's **The Spring**, a painter associated with Ficino's circle) was a way of illustrating that the highest mysteries, hidden in the "darkness rather than the light of Being", cannot be apprehended by the bodily senses alone, but through the purified soul, withdrawn into itself in the rapture of amorous ecstasy that precedes union with the ineffable.

74

THE HERMETIC TRADITION

In the section 'Alexandrian Hermeticism' (No. 18 of this Module III), we referred to the antediluvian and Atlantean origins of the Hermetic Tradition, drawing on what is mentioned in certain legends regarding the existence of a mythical 'Hermes of Hermes' who lived 'before the Flood'. Those same legends relate that from that Archetypal Hermes were born the "Chaldean Hermes" and the "Egyptian Hermes", that is to say, the two great civilisations which, within the *Kali-Yuga*, and alongside the pre-Columbian ones, are counted amongst the most important heirs of the Atlantean Tradition, in

which resided a spiritual power emanating directly from the Supreme Centre or Primordial Tradition. The Egyptian Hermes is none other than Thoth, the divine scribe and custodian of Sacred Science, he who is called the “Lord of Wisdom”, “the Mysterious One” and “the Unknown”, yet at the same time the intermediary between Heaven and Earth, for “without his knowledge, nothing can be done between the gods and men”.

That mediating function would become part of the Greek Hermes and the Roman Mercury, the God whom we encounter at the crossroads of life and who guides us along the path of Knowledge. Both, as we know, are depicted with wings on their heads and feet, thus bearing witness to that intermediary and aerial nature which unites the lower with the higher, and also carrying the caduceus as the emblem of their central function, through which they establish the link and union between the three worlds or planes of universal Existence, also present in the human microcosm. Thoth-Hermes-Mercury thus knows ‘all that is hidden beneath the celestial vault and in the bowels of the earth’, that is to say, the totality of the mysteries of the Cosmos, and he bestows this knowledge upon his lineage (those bound by his spiritual influence) through the revelation of a symbolic code that crystallises in the various arts and sciences of Cosmogony (those which have shaped Western culture and civilisation), including the sacred and sapiential texts directly inspired by Hermes himself, such as those comprising the *Corpus Hermeticum*, not forgetting all those bequeathed to us by the adepts and masters of this Tradition, which remains as alive and relevant today as it has been since its origins.

From the *Corpus Hermeticum* we wish to extract the following passages:

“Stop and regain your composure! Look upwards with the eyes of the heart – if not all of you, then at least those who are capable. The evil of ignorance floods the whole earth and ends up corrupting the soul imprisoned in the body, preventing it from docking at the harbour of salvation. Do not let yourselves be swept away by this mighty current; take advantage of the ebb, those of you who can, and dock at the harbour of salvation. Seek then a guide who will take you by the hand and lead you to the threshold of Knowledge. There the light shines, clear of all darkness. There no one is intoxicated.

Everyone is sober and observes with their heart the One who wishes to be seen, who cannot be heard or described, who cannot be seen with the eyes but only with the mind and the heart. But first you must strip off the tunic you wear, the garment of ignorance, the foundation of evil, the chain of corruption, the dark cell, the living death, the sentient corpse, the tomb you carry about with you, the thief who dwells within you, he who hates through what he loves and feels envy through what he hates.” *Poimandres* VII, 1–2.

“Such will be the state of the world in its old age: devoid of mercy, in chaos, and contemptuous of all that is good. When all this comes to pass, Asclepius, then the Lord and Father, the god whose power is supreme, ruler of the first god, will behold this conduct and these senseless crimes, and by an act of his will—which is the benevolence of God— he will confront the vices and perversion of all things, set right the errors, purify wickedness with a flood or by consuming it in flames, or put an end to it by spreading pestilential diseases far and wide. Then he will restore the world to

its former beauty, so that the world itself will once again appear worthy of wonder and worship, and, with constant blessings and ceremonies of praise, the people of these times will honour the god capable of performing and restoring such a great work. And this shall be the genesis of the world: a renewal of all that is good and a most sacred and pious restoration of nature itself, reordered in the course of time...". *Asclepius*, 26.

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THE SIGNS OF RENUNCIATION

At times this universe becomes very small, almost like a toy or a puppet theatre, an illusion whose reality one would scarcely believe in were it not for the fact that, for the moment, one finds oneself within it, living and suffering in and with it constantly. For, stripped of its symbolic and theophanic meaning, it is merely a multicoloured backdrop of phenomena beyond which begins that which is truly boundless and real. If anything 'saves' us precisely from this world, allowing us to live in it as harmoniously as possible, it is not the world itself or the things that exist within it, but the understanding of what exceeds and transcends it. And it is only faith, born of direct intuition, that allows us to follow and understand the ignorance of our doubts. And when we say 'world', we also refer to the 'ten thousand beings' that populate it, these being its microcosmic and transitory extension, as well as its affections, passions, instincts, ambitions and longings. Trapped within a limited view of their existence, human beings find it difficult to conceive of the idea of crossing the threshold that separates them from the 'beyond', or of overcoming the suffering involved in losing everything they love and wish to hold on to. For a culture that conceives of no reality other than the material, death and suffering, as well as life itself, are a complete absurdity, a question for which there is no explanation other than a shrug of the shoulders, or the most absurd assumptions. It is a vision devoid of hope or consolation that ultimately fosters an instinctive and destructive hatred towards everything, towards the world itself, giving rise to nihilism and scepticism.

It is the impermanence of things, the unreality of the world, that leads Siddhartha (the future Buddha Gautama Shakyamuni) to intuit, from the very beginning, Liberation or Union (*Yoga*) with the one true, unchanging Reality. And this is the basic message of Buddhism, as much as of Christianity, both preaching renunciation of the transient goods or misfortunes of this world, of its illusory reality. Indeed, on his first three journeys outside the palace grounds, where his father keeps him sheltered, Siddhartha contemplates sickness, old age and death for the first time. His vision confirms his intuitions: everything is suffering because every action desiring fixed 'results' produces a friction that wears one down. Everything is a continuous process of consumption or exhaustion, which renews itself only to continue wearing one down. The only escape from this inexorable wheel (*Samsâra*) is non-action, or the renunciation of its fruits, of the 'reward'. And since its external course cannot be halted—for it follows unchanging cyclical patterns of cause and effect—it is only through the inner path that this escape can be achieved (for the centre always lies within things), its reality being immutable, unaffected by the constant changes on the periphery.

We can see that in the cyclical circumstances in which we find ourselves living, this doctrine is a true remedy, a consolation for the soul which, today more

than ever feels estranged from its true homeland, exiled in this ‘valley of tears’. Indeed, desire and passion are the true driving forces of action (*karma*), which can never be satisfied, for action, in itself, never leads to rest, but rather generates secondary actions and reactions indefinitely. To put an end to desires and passions, through the knowledge of Cosmogony as the foundation of being and a gateway to metaphysics, is to stop adding fuel to the fire, and thus to free oneself from the constant need to do or to have.

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CROSSING THE WATERS

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the face of the deep, but the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness; and He called the light Day and the darkness Night, and there was evening and morning, the first day.

Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, to separate the waters from the waters’; and so it was. And God made the firmament, separating the waters from the waters, those under the firmament from those above the firmament. And God saw that it was good. God called the firmament ‘heaven’, and there was evening and morning, the second day.” (Genesis I, 1–8).

The soul’s journey towards the innermost and most subtle states of being is represented by various traditions as a ‘passage’ through the waters. The initiate must traverse the lower waters of their individual psyche, seeking to reach the upper waters that lie above the firmament.

Among the ancient Egyptians, the journey undertaken by the soul once it is freed from its earthly dwelling is ritually represented as a voyage undertaken in a boat, crossing the waters. However, it is important to emphasise that physical death is not necessary for this to take place, for initiatory death enables the adept to achieve a true separation from their individual circumstances and the literal nature of their physical body, and to undertake this journey through the waters towards their eternal abode whilst still alive.

There are various ways of symbolising this passage:

- a) Sometimes it is seen as a journey from the source of the river to the sea, in which case the ocean represents the higher waters, with the mouth of the river acting as a ‘mouth’ or a ‘gate’ through which one passes from the cosmic to the supra-cosmic.
- b) Another way of visualising it is as crossing from one bank of the river to the other, which is expressed by the symbol of the bridge linking its two opposite banks. In this case, each bank symbolises a different level of being, one corresponding to the earth and death, and the other to the heavens and immortality. This symbol – which is also associated with the rainbow – represents that intermediary entity which allows celestial energies to descend to the earthly world and the earth to communicate with the heavens. The bridge is a place of passage, of trials and dangers,

and crossing it constitutes the passage from earth to heaven. Conversely, that 'passage' has already been made by each individual being who, originating from a single Principle, became a manifested creature; and man's true task must be – according to Tradition – to rediscover or 'remember' the path of return that leads him back to his origin, crossing that invisible bridge that unites simultaneous states of being. The word *pontifex* (pontiff) means 'bridge-builder', and indeed the Pope or Hierophant himself (see the 5th card of the Major Arcana of the Tarot), being a mediator who connects the divine and the human, is himself, therefore, a true bridge that connects man with his spiritual reality. It is said that this bridge is narrow and – as in the symbolism of the gate – allows passage only to the 'chosen ones', the only ones capable of achieving true identity with the subtlest states of the Self.

c) Another way of representing this passage through the waters is through the symbol of travelling up the river towards its original source, navigating against the current. In this case, the ocean from which one sets out signifies the lower waters; the current against which the journey must be made represents the forces that seek to impede the ascent; and the source is the origin and destination – the immutable identity – of the true and eternal being.

Finally, it is interesting to note that in all these symbolisms of crossing the waters, there is an indication of the necessity of a passage through death, which the waters themselves – the 'current of forms' – symbolise.

"It is auspicious to cross the great waters." "It is auspicious to see the Great Man." (*I Ching*).

77

INITIATION II

We wish to revisit the subject of Initiation and its real possibility, and some clarifications must be made.

Firstly, it must be made clear that true Initiation is an intimate, secret process in which a person transforms the content of their mental images through a complete reformation of their psyche; it therefore involves a death to the profane conceptual world, which constitutes a reconversion of the self, and is consequently followed by a new birth into a different state. It has also been pointed out that there are two such deaths and therefore three births—two initiatory ones and the profane one—and these births are perfectly effective and real, clearly indicated by cycles and signs to those who participate in them.

The path is the Symbolic, as the science of correspondences and analogies, and the cycles, rhythms, frequencies and cadences in which these symbols manifest themselves in the being and its environment. That is, the Way of Knowledge, supported by physical practices and psychological verifications as pillars of the Self and its true Metaphysical realisation: in short, the quest for and actualisation of the third birth, that is, entry into the

Greater Mysteries. To this end, this Introduction to Sacred Science draws upon the invisible elements – spiritual energies – which, when externalised in the form of lessons, enable the Adept’s initiatory journey to be guided. These elements take the form of the Hermetic Tradition, on the one hand, and on the other, the comparison of the message of this Tradition – and the life experiences that the study and immersion in it entail – with other traditional manifestations – religious or otherwise – which together constitute the Original, Universal and Unanimous Tradition.

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At this stage of our Programme, it is almost essential to publish the text of the most important Hermetic document. This is the *Emerald Tablet*, the legacy of the mythical and archetypal Hermes Trismegistus, directly linked to the Egyptian Tradition:

1.	"It is true, without falsehood, certain and most true: That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, so that the miracles of one and the same may be wrought."
2.	"Just as all things proceed from the One, through the contemplation of the One, so all things result from this single thing through adaptation."
3.	"His father is the Sun, his mother is the Moon, the wind carried him in her womb, his nurse is the Earth."
4.	"He is the father of every wonder in the whole world."
5.	"His power is perfect when he becomes Earth."
6.	"Separate Earth from Fire, and the subtle from the gross, gently and with great care."
7.	"Ascend from Earth to Heaven, descend again to Earth, and unite the powers of the things above and those below. In this way you shall possess the glory of the whole world, and all darkness shall depart from you."
8.	"This is the strength of all strengths, for it overcomes all that is subtle and penetrates all that is solid."
9.	"In this way the world was created."
10.	"Therefore, wondrous transformations shall take place, the means for which are set forth here."
11.	"That is why I am called Hermes Trismegistus, for I possess the three parts of the Philosophy of the whole world."
12.	"What I have said regarding the work of the Sun is now finished and complete."

79 NOTE

Kundalini is an energy that ascends from the earth towards the heavens, extremes for which man, situated at the centre or axis of the world, is a place of encounter and fusion; an energy that the initiate must guide by uniting opposites in order to attain, through this step-by-step ascent, the Union (Yoga) with the unmanifested Origin of the universe, thanks to the gradual knowledge, by degrees – or states of being – of the universal Whole.

This operation is the work of uniting the complementary and resolving oppositions, which is achieved through an understanding of the principles and the apprehension and contemplation of reality by means of the revealed symbols or vehicles, capable of awakening within us the various interpretations of the Mystery that constitutes it: from the manifested to the unmanifested, as taught by the Hermetic Emerald Tablet: "Separate the Earth from the Fire, and the subtle from the gross, gently and with great care. Ascend from the Earth to Heaven, descend again to the Earth, and unite the powers of the things above and those below."

Both the Far Eastern Tradition (including its application in Tai Chi) and Freemasonry are in agreement through their constructive symbolism: from an immovable plumb line hanging from an unmanifested point, an axis descends, passing through the centre of all movements—physical, emotional and intellectual; a balance and hierarchy to which the being conforms through the rite that leads to what the latter calls the 'endogeny of the Immortal', the full development of which will be identical to the crowning of the Work or the attainment of the Philosopher's Stone.

It is through this very axis that the force of gravity, which points downwards, is combined with the path of ascent, which is directed upwards: the apex of Heaven or the Celestial Pole (hence the 'form' of Tai Chi, the harmonious sequence of its movements according to different schools, synthetically reproduces, amongst other things, the gestures of certain animals taken as symbols of the movements of the soul).

This concerns the cosmic form: the three worlds – or four if the intermediate plane is divided, that of the soul, into upper and lower—united by an invisible axis (the centre is virtually present but belongs, as it is in itself, to a plane other than that of its manifestations), which, starting from its Origin, gives rise to all things through the polarisation of two unmanifested principles: Heaven and Earth, whilst at the same time constituting the path of return. "The Tao of Man follows the Tao of Earth, the Tao of Earth follows the Tao of Heaven, the Tao of Heaven follows the Tao of Taos".

For Tantra, the Shakti of Brahma, his creative and transformative power, is symbolically found, in a passive and potential state, within man, at the base of his spinal column (called Mēru-danda: the 'axis or sceptre of Mount Meru' in its microcosmic correspondence), or the central axis of his body, and is described as a serpent coiled upon itself, whose ascent and unfolding (Kundalini-yoga) through its interior (along the sushumnā, the solar ray analogous within the human being to the sutrātmā or 'thread of Ātmā' that unites the 'necklace' of worlds) gradually awakens, revitalising and expanding the various chakras ('wheels') situated at different levels of the spinal cord, until it reaches, via the brain, the upper end of the cranial vault and opens above it at the Sahasrāra chakra (the 'Thousand-petalled Lotus'); a gradual and successive opening which, in initiatory terms, corresponds to the effective realisation of the higher states. Surrounding the sushumnā are the other two main subtle nādis ("channels"), idā (feminine, lunar, descending) and pingalā (masculine, solar, ascending), which intertwine in a helical pattern six times around the first, precisely at the level of the corresponding chakras, and whose

immediately evokes that of the Hermetic caduceus; these are physiologically related, from bottom to top, to the coccygeal, sacral, lumbar, dorsal-cordial, cervical, and encephalic-pineal regions, and the latter to the crown and what lies above it. The true location of these 'centres' is indeed subtle and extracorporeal, which does not preclude the possibility of a precise mutual correspondence and interaction between both orders, just as occurs, as we have seen, between the planets and the metals corresponding to them. Likewise, they are symbolically represented for meditation through geometric forms (yantras) which in turn contain mantras, all within lotuses whose petals are letters of the Sanskrit alphabet and which are also considered the abode of the corresponding deities and their shaktis or powers; the nature of Kundalinī, sonorous and luminous, spreads through the primary and secondary nādis together with the prāna (the vital spirit, analogous to the chi of the Far Eastern tradition) throughout the entire individual being.

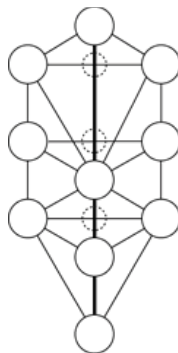
In our case, it is doubly important to note that this structure of the human being's subtle anatomy is equally present in the scheme of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, in which the sushumnā is its central channel or pillar, and the idā and pingalā are, respectively, the lateral columns of rigour and grace; This is only natural, as it is a fundamental symbolism that the sacred vehicles of the various traditions cannot fail to bear witness to, even with differences in detail due to their own perspectives. Similarly, in Hebrew esotericism, the nucleus of immortality, described as a luminous, indestructible almond (Light), is symbolically situated at the base of the spinal column.

If we count the points marked along the central Pillar in the sephirothic diagram that includes the paths (see the following diagram as well as that in Module II, section 25), we shall see that it is at seven levels of the same, indicated by the sefiroth of the Pillar of Balance and the midpoints between those that form the Pillars of Grace and Severity, where the analogy with the chakras of the Hindu tradition is found. These are the vertices and the midpoint of the bases of the triangles formed by the three triads of the Tree plus the sefirah of the highest plane (see Module I, diagram No. 25). Following the correspondences of this model with the human body established by Kabbalah (see the Note following the aforementioned diagram), and in this Module III, No. 41), we see that the first sefirah, Kether, the crown, corresponds in effect to the Sahasrāra chakra, situated above the crown of the head and which, according to yoga, constitutes the gateway or passage from the cosmic to the supra-cosmic or unmanifest. From the union or balance between Hokhmah and Binah, wisdom and intelligence (the right and left eyes and the respective cerebral hemispheres), arises, according to the Kabbalah, the non-sefirah, Daath, knowledge, situated between the two as the 'third eye' or 'eye of Knowledge', the ajna chakra, whose vision destroys – or unites – opposites in the simultaneity of the 'eternal present'. Likewise, and from another perspective, Hokhmah and Binah are, for Kabbalah, the 'Sun of Suns' and the 'Moon of Moons', and in various traditions, including the Hindu tradition, the right and left eyes of the Universal Man (the Adam Kadmon of Kabbalah) are likewise the Sun and the Moon. Hesed and Geburah, grace and rigour, associated with both shoulders, unite in the body at the level of the cervical region, the same as the vishuddha chakra situated in the throat.

Tifereth, beauty, and the anâhata chakra both correspond to the heart. Netsah and Hod, the hips and legs, correspond to the manipûra chakra, located in the navel region. As for Yesod and Malkhuth, the genitals and the base or soles of the feet, there is a variation in their sephirothic position: the former corresponds, by its meaning, to the mûlâdhâra chakra (“root, support, foundation”), which is located at the base of the spine, and the latter, the “kingdom”, or dwelling place of the Shekhinah, to the swâdhishthâna chakra (the “proper residence” of the Shakti).



fig. 41



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THE OCTAGON

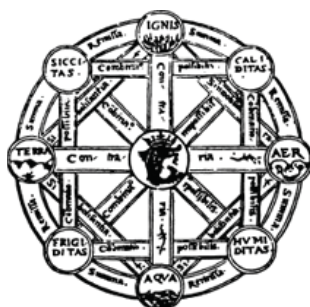
Since the square represents the earth and the circle an image of the heavens, the octagon is regarded as a figure capable of uniting both and therefore as a symbol of the intermediate world that connects the lower with the upper. Hence it is associated with the idea of the mystery of the ‘squaring of the circle’ and the ‘circling of the square’ (see Module II: ‘The Compass and the Square’, No. 21), which has served to express the spiritualisation of the body and the ‘incorporation’ of the spirit – that is, the indissoluble union of the spiritual and the material – and which is also used to represent the ‘passage’ through that intermediate world. The number eight is often associated with death, and in particular with initiatory death. The thirteenth card of the Tarot is indeed placed in the eighth *sefirah* (*Hod*), and in astrology the eighth house is the house of death. This indicates that this ‘passage’ must involve death to the profane states and resurrection to the higher worlds, and in this sense the octagon symbolises a true spiritual regeneration involving a transmutation and a new birth.

In relation to the symbolism of crossing the waters, it is interesting to note that the steering wheel used to navigate the ship is octagonal in shape or has eight spokes. Furthermore, on the journey through the waters, certain points of reference and orientation are necessary, and it is precisely the symbol of the compass rose – which is also related to that of the ‘eight gates’ – that is used to designate the eight directions of space (the four cardinal points and four intermediate ones) which will serve as a guide during the initiatory journey. Depictions of the wheel often feature eight spokes, and in some cases these are combined with the four elements (earth, water, air and fire) and

the four intermediate states of matter (dry, wet, cold and hot).

In the Far Eastern tradition, the octagon has always been accorded fundamental symbolic importance, and it forms the basic structure of the Book of Changes or *I Ching*. Also common among the Chinese are temples with a square base (earth) crowned by a semi-spherical dome (heaven), which appears to be supported by eight pillars or columns (intermediate world – man).

In Christian architectural symbolism, we see how ancient baptisteries were octagonal, as are—even now—baptismal fonts. Water baptism brings about a real transition to other states and a new birth, preparing us for the baptism of fire that is to take place at the altar or heart of the temple. From there, the journey is vertical and ascending and does not stop until the ‘summit’ of the building is crossed, which occurs symbolically when one passes through the central point of the octagon that divides its dome, thanks to which one moves from the cosmic to the supra-cosmic, from the human to the supra-human or divine. We shall return to these concepts when we explore other symbolisms of ‘passage’ that are closely related to this one and complement one another.



[fig. 42](#)

81

PICO DE LA MIRANDOLA

Juan Pico de la Mirándola, Count of Concordia (1463–1494), was, like Marsilio Ficino, one of the most important Hermetic philosophers of the early Renaissance. It is said that, at his birth, a ball of fire suddenly appeared in his mother’s bedroom, which, rather than an anecdotal event, can be seen as an omen of the role and spiritual destiny he was destined to fulfil. Despite the brevity of his life, Pico della Mirandola left a body of work that would prove decisive for the definitive consolidation of Renaissance Hermeticism, although his writings do not today accurately reflect the significance of his work.

Building on the work begun by Ficino, Pico della Mirandola further expanded the synthesis undertaken by the Florentine master by incorporating into his work doctrinal elements drawn from various philosophies and traditions of the East and West, and especially from Kabbalah. This spirit of

harmony would be embodied in the *Nine Hundred Theses*, with which Pico would demonstrate the essential convergence found at the inner (esoteric) core of all traditions, far beyond formal differences and the purported dogmatic and exclusionary 'orthodoxies'. Thus, the man who was dubbed the 'Phoenix of his time' and the 'enchanting prince of the Renaissance' became, for his era, a faithful exponent of the Perennial Philosophy. The *Nine Hundred Theses* (some of which led to serious clashes with the Vatican curia) open, by way of a prologue, with a 'Prayer on the Dignity of Man', in which, with impassioned rhetoric, Pico expounded on the central position that man occupies in the cosmos. As has already been mentioned, Pico inherited the thought of Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, who, drawing on the sources of Platonic metaphysics and Hermeticism, developed the idea that opposites—which the limits of reason cannot overcome—find their reconciling balance in Unity, in which all doctrines and religions likewise merge.

This is a statement that corresponds to the Renaissance conception of man as a theurgist capable of operating on the various planes of the universe thanks to the knowledge of a totalising wisdom, the key to which lay in Hermetic art and science. Here one can see just how far this conception differed from the simple 'humanism' with which the entire Renaissance has been unilaterally labelled, without considering the various currents of traditional thought that existed within it. Man's 'dignity' is derived from his awareness of being a conscious collaborator in the work of creation, through whose axis he may ascend and descend, for his nature participates equally in the lower and the higher, "and, if not satisfied with any kind of creature (earthly or heavenly), he withdraws into the centre of his unity, becoming one spirit with God, drawn into the mysterious solitude of the Father, he who was placed above all things, he will surpass them all. Who could fail to admire this chameleon?"

But undoubtedly the most significant undertaking of Pico della Mirandola was his introduction of Kabbalah into the occult philosophy of the Renaissance. And it was precisely the Jews who had arrived in Italy from Spain who passed on the Kabbalah to the young count. Among these Jews, some were converts and therefore well-versed in both Kabbalah and Christianity. This was the case with León Hebreo, Flavio Mitridates and Pablo de Heredia, who guided Pico towards offering a Kabbalistic interpretation of Christianity, in a sense adapting one tradition to the other. Convinced that Kabbalah confirmed the truths of Christianity, Pico shaped Christian Kabbalah, which complemented perfectly the Hermetic and Neoplatonic Gnosticism inherited from Ficino (see section [73](#)). The study and knowledge of the divine names, and the invocation of their powers through the alchemy of prayer, constituted the cornerstone of the Christian Kabbalistic edifice, from which a theurgy was derived that predisposed the adept to communication with the angelic realms. Following the Kabbalist rabbis and Church Fathers such as St Jerome, for Christian Kabbalists each of the words, signs, syllables and dots in the sacred books (Bible, *Zohar*, *Sefer Yetzirah*, *Bahir*, etc.) manifest the fullness of the divine message in the ordered and hierarchical multiplicity of their meanings. To alter or remove anything from the contents of these books is to cut the 'roots of the plants', and thus to interrupt the path

that leads to the Tree of Life standing at the centre of *the Pardes*. It is quite another matter to make use of the combination and permutation of the letters and words of the sacred alphabet, for this allows one to discover highly revealing doctrinal truths. The entire system of Kabbalistic combination and permutation derived from the sciences of letters known as *Gematria*, *Notarikon* and *Themurah*. Pico assimilates the method of combining letters (by adding their corresponding numerical value) to *the ars combinandi* of Raymond Lull. Pico himself used the 'art of combination' to demonstrate, as he explains in his 'Magical-Kabbalistic Conclusions' (included in the *Nine Hundred Theses*), that: 'There is no science that gives us greater certainty regarding the divinity of Christ than magic and Kabbalah'. This, which scandalised the narrow-minded spirits of Christianity, nevertheless opened up unsuspected possibilities for all those seeking a path to fulfilment based on Theurgy and Natural Magic. In turn, in the seventh of these "Conclusions", Pico emphatically states: "No Hebrew Kabbalist can deny that the name *IESU* (Jesus), interpreted according to Kabbalistic principles, means 'Son of God'". And in the fourteenth, he concludes by stating that the name of Jesus and the Tetragrammaton יהוה are identical, but with the addition of a *Shin* ש in the middle of the four letters: ה ש ה ו .

A Christian Kabbalist disciple of Pico, Johannes Reuchlin, would later add in his book **De Verbo Mirifico** that the consonant *s* (*Shin*) in the name of Jesus makes it possible to pronounce, and consequently to hear, the ineffable *Tetragrammaton*. This was a way of demonstrating, Kabbalistically, the divine nature of Christ, the Word incarnate of the Father. Thus, what Jewish exotericism denied (out of ignorance) is affirmed by esotericism. For Pico and the Christian Kabbalists, Jesus was the Messiah, the historical and supra-historical culmination of the Sinaitic revelation given by Moses to the people of Israel. From his *Conclusions*, we reproduce the following:

–	Metaphysical unity is the foundation of arithmetic unity.
–	The essence and existence of anything are in reality the same.
–	Number is found in both abstract and material things alike.
–	The essence of any intelligence exists substantially for a purpose.
–	There is nothing in the world that lacks life.
–	Magic is the practical side of natural science.
–	What the magician does through the art, nature did naturally in creating man.
–	To practise magic is nothing other than to fertilise the world.
–	Whoever copulates at midnight with <i>Tifereth</i> will ensure that their entire generation prospers.
–	Through Kabbalah, and specifically through the mystery of the northern part, it is known why God will judge the age by fire.

The sections on Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola have served as an introduction to Renaissance Hermetic philosophy, whose history—marked by illuminating visions and magical-theurgical events always linked to the quest for Knowledge—left an indelible mark on Western culture and the Western soul. As we have already noted, the syntheses carried out by Ficino and Pico, together with the emergence of the *Corpus Hermeticum* in Latin Europe, marked the beginning of a new phase and development of the Art Regia, significantly enriched by the contribution of Christian Kabbalah. From its initial focus in Italy, Renaissance Hermeticism spread widely throughout Germany, France and England, eventually taking root across virtually the entire continent, including Spain, although its presence there was less pronounced due to the increasingly powerful Catholic and inquisitorial dogmatism. It was precisely from Germany that the aforementioned Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522) hailed; during his travels to Italy, he came into contact with Neoplatonic and Christian Kabbalistic circles, representing the type of Hermetic humanist in the tradition of Ficino and Pico. Reuchlin studied and delved into the mysteries of the Kabbalah and the Hebrew language, using this knowledge to develop fundamental aspects of Christian Kabbalah highlighted by Pico in the *Conclusions* and the *Heptaplus*. Reuchlin, a great connoisseur of Greek culture (he was called ‘Pythagoras reborn’), is credited with introducing Pythagorean numerology to Christian Kabbalistic theosophy, a concept already implicit in that system thanks to Platonic cosmology and metaphysics. Let us recall that Pico had pointed out that ‘in number one may find the means to investigate and comprehend all that it is possible to know’. We see, thus, that in his first work, **De Verbo Mirifico** (‘The Wonderful Word’), Reuchlin affirms the analogy between the *Tetragrammaton* and the Pythagorean *Tetraktys*, and between this and the ten divine numbers and names of the Tree of Life, a diagram which from then on became definitively integrated into the Hermetic worldview, beyond the strictly Jewish sphere. But it is in his second work, *De Arte Cabalistica*, that Reuchlin sets out the comprehensive doctrine of Christian Kabbalah, which became the manual for study and meditation for all adherents of Hermetic Science. In *De Arte Cabalistica*, it is stated that Kabbalah is an alchemy that transmutes the world of external appearances into internal perceptions, producing an ever-increasing refinement of human faculties, until their definitive transformation into spirit and light.

However, just as hermetic and kabbalistic ideas were spreading, pockets of violent opposition to these ideas and their proponents began to emerge; these attacks came chiefly from certain theologians and from scholastic philosophy, which was in a state of rapid decline and had lost its grasp of traditional principles. This conflict would be a constant feature throughout the Renaissance, intensifying with the emergence of the Reformation spearheaded by Luther and Erasmus. In this regard, it is worth noting that the Reformation initially drew on certain concepts derived from Christian Kabbalah, whilst many Christian Kabbalists looked

the reformist movement with hope, as it advocated a return to the original purity of the Gospels. This remained the case until, in turn, the Protestant Reformation descended into a sterile religious puritanism in the service of the rationalist and anti-traditionalist tenets that gave birth to the modern world. Yet there were also men of the Church who took a keen interest in Kabbalistic Hermeticism, and even played a part in its dissemination. Such was the case of Cardinal Egidio of Viterbo (1465–1532), who protected and surrounded himself with scholars versed in Kabbalah and Hermeticism, just as another cardinal, Bessarion, had done in the time of Ficino and Pico. A translator of the *Zohar*, Egidio of Viterbo left behind a considerable body of work, the most notable of which, in terms of content, is the work entitled *Shekhinah*, in which Reuchlin's influence is evident. For Viterbo, the *Shekhinah* (the real presence of the divine) is the very voice of Wisdom that manifests itself in the heart of the righteous, revealing to them the heavenly mysteries. He equates it with the Holy Spirit, through whose mediation the Law has been revealed over the centuries to the prophets and apostles. As it is said in the *Zohar*: 'When two or three gather around the *Torah*, the *Shekhinah* will be in their midst.' In words that evoke the Hermetic 'Emerald Tablet', Viterbo puts these words into the mouth of the *Shekhinah*: 'For this is my secret: both on earth and in heaven. Why would I have created the heavens, the elements, the stones, the metals, the herbs, the trees, the four-legged beasts, the fish, the birds, and mankind, if not so that the same might occur on earth as in heaven, and that the sensible world might imitate the intelligible: and I have inscribed signs upon matter just as the Egyptians have imitated them.'

One of the most prominent Hermetic masters of the first half of the 16th century in Italy was the monk Francesco Giorgi (or Zorzi) of Venice (1460–1540), a city which, after Florence, became the capital of Renaissance occult philosophy. Drawing on Neoplatonic, Pythagorean and Kabbalistic sources, as well as the theology of Dionysius the Areopagite, Giorgi wrote **De Harmonia Mundi**, perhaps the work which, alongside those of Reuchlin and Agrippa, would have the greatest influence on Hermetic Kabbalists throughout Europe. In *De Harmonia Mundi*, there are constant magical-theurgical correspondences between the angelic (and also *sephirotic*), zodiacal and planetary hierarchies—that is, the entire celestial order—which is inevitably reflected in the sublunary or terrestrial world.

For Giorgi, the harmony of the universe, its beauty, enables man to comprehend and perceive the perfection of the Monad or Supreme Unity. All the planes and levels of creation, from the highest to the elemental, vibrate to the same chord struck upon the tuning fork of the divine Architect, albeit at different pitches or degrees of intensity. Man perceives this subtle harmony through geometric and numerical modules, which find their most beautiful and essential expressions in architecture and music. Indeed, the geometric-numerological concepts set out in **De Harmonia Mundi** were applied in certain Renaissance buildings, in the construction of which Giorgi was directly involved, as was the case with the Convent of San Francesco della Vigna in Venice. *De Harmonia Mundi* was translated into French by the hermetic poet Guy Le Fèvre de la Boderie (who also translated Pico), who described it as a treasure trove of 'beautiful similarities, such that one might say the whole is composed of a single block of various paintings (the diverse doctrinal sources from which it drew inspiration), embellished and enriched with art'. This translation had a great influence on Guillaume Postel and his school, which

represented the main centre of expansion for Christian Kabbalah in France, a country which, incidentally, would play an important role in preserving traditional ideas to this day. No less notable was Giorgi's influence in the England of Elizabeth I, which in the second half of the 16th century was truly an 'island' of tolerance towards Hermetic philosophy and science, a tolerance that contrasted with what was happening on the rest of the continent, where these were being persecuted with increasing severity by the Inquisition and the Counter-Reformation.

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Like Christian Kabbalah, Alchemy also played a part in the development and dissemination of Renaissance Hermeticism. Naturally, both disciplines were and are inseparable, and indeed the alchemical Great Work provided Christian Kabbalists with an understanding of nature conceived as a magical entity, through which the reality of contact with the ontological and metaphysical plane was re-established. In other words, Alchemy represented, in a sense, the 'practical' method for achieving the essential inner transmutation that made possible the ascent through the degrees of the *scala philosophorum*.

Perhaps the person who most clearly set out the links between Christian Kabbalah, alchemy and natural magic was Cornelius Agrippa (1485–1535), particularly in his famous treatise **Occult Philosophy**. This work is divided into three parts, each corresponding to the three worlds: the Elemental, the Celestial and the Intellectual, according to the definition given by Agrippa himself. Keeping in mind at all times the constant relationships and unity between the three cosmogonic planes, in the first part of his book – entitled 'Natural Magic' – Agrippa carefully details the virtues and properties of the beings and things that inhabit the sublunar sphere, or *Corpus Mundi*. All manner of instructions and rules are provided for the proper interpretation, "as taught by the Magi and Philosophers", of the terrestrial mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms in the light of their celestial prototypes. In the second part – "Celestial Magic" – the *Anima Mundi* or *Anima Vitae* is described, governed by the powers of the stars, the planets and the zodiac. This part is almost entirely devoted to numbers and geometry, for Agrippa, like Giorgi, believed that the subtle geography of the marvellous 'celestial machine' is governed and animated by the Ideas manifested by numbers and geometric forms. The Platonic and Pythagorean influence is thus evident. And finally, Agrippa devotes the third book to "Ceremonial Magic", which is precisely the invocatory magic of angels and divine names, those that constitute the *Spiritus Mundi*, the giver of the fertilising and luminous word that enlivens the entire cosmos with its supernatural influence. The essence of Christian Kabbalah is captured here, for in addition to offering an exhaustive interpretation of the *Sephirotic* emanations, constant references are made to the name of Jesus, "who possesses all the virtue of the four-letter name, expanding its power and virtue, for this Father *Tetragramma* gave him power over all things". Likewise, there are extensive allusions to the four divine 'furores' that the magician invokes in his theurgical operations: that of the Muses, that of Dionysus, that of Apollo, and that of Venus. And as if warning of the difficulties and paradoxes presented by the Hermetic path to all who venture upon it, Agrippa concludes with these words taken from the biblical text: "When you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and in all the tribulation of your soul." A tireless traveller, Agrippa carried the message throughout his native Germany, Italy, France and England. In all these countries he taught, trained disciples and established schools, coming into contact with the most important hermetic and kabbalistic circles. He is also persecuted and branded a charlatan and sorcerer by the eternal enemies of the doctrine, against whom he defends himself by arguing that the magician "is not synonymous with charlatan, superstitious or demonic, but is equivalent

a sage, priest or prophet”, such was the high regard in which he held his ministry and role.

Among those influenced by his thinking, the engraver and painter Albrecht Dürer deserves special mention; his two works, ‘Melancholia I’ and ‘Saint Jerome in his Study’, constitute authentic hermetic-alchemical treatises. It should be noted that Dürer was also the master of an esoteric guild of craftsmen, much like his contemporary Leonardo da Vinci, which was quite common in an era that, as we are seeing, and despite its contradictions and complexity, strongly championed the enduring values of the traditional Western spirit. On the other hand, many 16th-century alchemists recorded the Hermetic worldview in paintings and engravings of great symbolic and iconographic richness, thus continuing a form of expression that dated back to the Alexandrian era, and above all to the Middle Ages. It could be said that the use of the plastic and visual arts as a means of conveying the Great Work would continue among the adepts of the 17th and 18th centuries, some of whom we shall discuss in later sections.

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ALCHEMY

Continuing with the master alchemists of the 16th century, we must also mention the great physician Paracelsus (1493–1541). As an alchemist, his medical practice centred on the study and observation of nature, and more precisely on the way in which nature weaves its hidden and invisible workings; for, ultimately, it is the spirit—and through it the soul of the world and of man—that alone can heal sick bodies.

Taking as its starting point the Hermetic principle that ‘magic is natural because nature is magical’, Paracelsus’s medicine is founded on the correspondences and analogies between the macrocosm and the microcosm, which together form a single organism ‘in which things harmonise and sympathise with one another’. Both “are nothing more than a constellation, an influence, a breath, a harmony, a time, a metal, a fruit”. Paracelsus summarises this intimate link between the invisible and the visible, which helps to build the architecture of the cosmos and life, as follows: “The stars do not influence bodies directly, but rather the vital force. That is why the organs are not in themselves but bodily representations (symbols) of invisible energies that act throughout the organism. In reality, the true liver is a force that circulates throughout all parts of the body, but which has its seat in an organ that we call by that name.” Illness arises the moment a dissociation occurs within that macro- and microcosmic unity, for each organ or part of the body corresponds to a planet or zodiacal sign, which in turn influence certain minerals, metals, plants and animals. Hence, if a diseased organ results from a deficiency, this is remedied by administering – or, conversely, by neutralising the influence if it is an excess – the corresponding natural product with which that organ is in sympathy. However, according to Paracelsus, illness is not merely an excess or deficiency of something (which would be merely the effect) but is also a ‘being’ or an entity of the intermediate spiritual plane, linked, just like old age, to the dissolving and corrosive power of time, which is why alchemical and traditional medicine seeks to “extract the ‘quintessence’ of things, uncover their mysteries,

preparing elixirs capable of restoring man's lost health'; and, more importantly, to reintegrate him into the primordial state. Illness would thus be, not an evil in itself, but rather a means like any other for 'ascending towards the divine plane', reconciling the opposites that arise from its action.

85

THE LADDER

When Jacob was fleeing from his brother Esau, stopping to spend the night, he took a stone and placed it at his head:

"And he had a dream; he dreamed of a ladder resting on the earth, the top of which reached to the heavens, and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it. And he saw that Yahweh was standing upon it" (Genesis XXVIII, 12–13).

The energies of creation symbolically ascend and descend via the ladder, for it is like a vertical bridge connecting earth with heaven, the material with the spiritual. Through it, the subtle and invisible energies descend to mankind, who in turn have the possibility of climbing its rungs towards the heavenly homeland.

In the initiatory process, this symbol plays a dual role in both the 'descent' and the 'ascent'. The descent into the underworld or journey into the earth's interior, which takes place in the first stage of initiation, is sometimes depicted as a staircase leading underground; conversely, the gods, messengers or celestial energies that visit the earth descend via a mysterious staircase. But, in general, its meaning is rather ascending, representing the step-by-step elevation of consciousness on the path of knowledge.

There is a similarity and complementarity between the symbolism of the staircase and that of the door, since both indicate a 'passage' to other states, and the former, in many cases, precedes the latter. Such is the case with the symbolism of the Christian church: first, one sees the steps between the atrium and the outer door; then, they appear again before reaching the altar; and finally, the most important is the invisible staircase connecting the altar to the dome, at the centre of which lies the narrow gate to which we have already referred. Furthermore, in Christian art one often sees the relationship between the staircase and the tree, and between both and the cross—all axial symbols whose function is to link what is above with what is below. The true ladder is planted at the centre of the world, and, as we know, any sacred space can represent that centre. However, all notions of a centre must lead us to our own inner self, from which the ladder must emerge that will allow us to access – when we reach its summit – the world of the gods.

This symbol is also related to that of the spiral – as is evident in the 'spiral' staircase – for both refer to the hierarchies of existence, the levels of Knowledge and the degrees of understanding reality. Each of its rungs represents a different 'heaven', a state of being; and climbing them signifies the gradual ascent of the soul seeking union with the one spirit.

In architectural symbolism, the staircase is, on the one hand, a tool of the trade (ladder) and, on the other, an integral part of the structure itself (steps). The very structure of the pyramid, for example, speaks to us of the step-by-step ascent towards the centre of being; and its relationship with the mountain is also interesting, as in certain cases the mountain is ritually climbed and its ascent carries the same meaning.

The number of rungs or steps on the ladder is significant and varies according to what it is symbolising. The most common are those with three and seven rungs; although they are also often found in numbers of nine, ten, twelve, thirty and thirty-three, etc. The three-step ladder is generally associated with the three degrees (of apprentice, fellow and master) of initiation. The seven-step ladder also carries this meaning when – as in the symbolism of the seven *chakras* – the degrees are of that number. The latter is clearly visible in the musical scale, which in turn is linked to that of the planets, metals, colours – the rainbow is sometimes depicted as a scale – and the seven days of the week, all symbols that speak to us of the progressive ascent through the seven planetary ‘heavens’ – exemplified by the seven liberal arts and the *sephiroth* themselves – which we must visit on our initiatory journeys and whose realisation will always entail a gradual expansion of consciousness.

In the human body, the natural symbolism most clearly associated with the ladder is that of the thirty-three vertebrae that make up the spinal column, the axial axis that provides its point of balance; though the simple division of the body into head, trunk and limbs also has a stepped and hierarchical meaning.

Indeed, the symbol of the ladder teaches us that creation is hierarchical, that these hierarchies are in truth internal, and that we must come to know them, by climbing them within ourselves, in order to awaken and realise our true spiritual potential.

The word ‘scale’ is also linked to the idea of ‘proportion’, and in that sense, human beings can be seen as created ‘to scale’ with the universe. Indeed, man has limits, for his senses allow him to perceive only a certain scale of reality (our eyes cannot see infrared or ultraviolet colours; nor can we perceive with the naked eye the planets furthest from Saturn; nor can our ears hear the lowest and highest musical scales). However, first the recognition of these limits, and then the step-by-step ascent through the degrees of being, will allow us to reach the limitless, where the idea of hierarchy loses its reality and only the pure equality of essence reigns.

86

THE PRE-COLUMBIAN TRADITION

In the late 15th and 16th centuries, Europeans ‘discovered’ America. However, the Pre-Columbian Tradition had always existed, and its existence was known since ancient times according to the testimony of Plato, who, speaking of Atlantis—an island-continent lost to a catastrophe—tells us that its colonies were scattered throughout the West across small islands, archipelagos and the mainland. Likewise, other colonies of this continent were situated in Africa and Europe, and their

the heirs of none other than Egypt (and through it, Greece and the whole of the West), Chaldea (which had a fundamental influence on the peoples of the Middle East and the Mediterranean) and the Celts (who had a particular influence in Spain, Ireland, England and France).

However, for centuries it was taboo to cross the Pillars of Hercules and venture into the Atlantic Ocean (the root 'Atl' is still very widespread today among the *Nahuatl* peoples), which was finally undertaken, due to cyclical and historical imperatives, by Spain, followed by Portugal and subsequently by England, France, Holland, etc. This is how the Americas were 'discovered', and from that moment on they became the economic objective of the whole of Europe, blinded solely by the gold and riches of those lands, to such an extent that they paid no heed to the culture of that immense continent, its traditions and its people, who were physically exterminated, whilst their rites, myths, symbols, customs and traditions—living expressions of their cosmogonic and theogonic conception—were scorned. This situation has persisted to the present day, and only a minority of scholars (particularly from the mid-19th century and throughout the 20th) have dedicated themselves to rescuing traditional pre-Columbian values, which are found in countless numbers and everywhere, amongst the hundreds of distinct peoples (and languages) scattered from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. However, all these nations—which included both nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples and medium-sized or large civilisations—have an obvious common origin, despite their cultural differences, many of which arose as diverse geographical and historical adaptations, and even through possible contact with other societies.

The study of Pre-Columbian Tradition is of the utmost importance both for those who, for one reason or another, have had contact with the Americas, and for researchers of traditions, religions and comparative philosophies. Particularly regarding symbols, rites and myths, for one may observe, with surprise, how this cosmogony and theogony align with those of the Mediterranean (to such an extent that the priest-chroniclers of the conquest never fail to highlight the close ties with Judaism and Christianity) and even with those of India and China, to give just a couple of examples, demonstrating the essential identity of all traditions, living or dead, as is the case with the Pre-Columbian tradition, whose symbols await revival to become active energies in the deranged and twilight modern world. The reader must, however, proceed with the utmost caution and not be tempted by false clues or enthusiastic aspirations. Perhaps one might regard the reconstruction of this immense puzzle presented by the ancient indigenous cultures, or other equally little-known ones, as aids to one's own Initiation; especially if one could understand the symbolism of this Tradition as archetypal, and therefore capable of manifesting itself and acting within our psyche, in our own lives. We conclude with an excerpt from Porphyry's *Peri Agamaton*, appropriate to the idea of reviving a Tradition that is practically dead.

"I reveal notions of theological wisdom; it is God and the powers of God that men have revealed through these notions. They have done so through images appropriate to the senses, imprinting invisible things upon visible works, for those who have learnt to

to decipher from the depictions what is engraved concerning the gods, just as one would do in books. Moreover, there is nothing strange in the fact that those most lacking in education take statues for blocks of stone or wood, just as those who cannot read see in stelae, tablets or books nothing more than stones, wood or bound papyrus.

87

THE ISABELIAN RENAISSANCE

Towards the middle of the 16th century, there was a certain decline in the Hermetic movement that had emerged so forcefully a hundred years earlier in Italy. The actions carried out by the Counter-Reformation played a major role in this; in its supposed zeal to preserve and defend what it understood as the 'purity' of the Catholic religion, it persecuted all those ideas that did not conform to its narrow criteria. Religious tolerance persisted only in those nations where the respective states had embraced the Reformation, such as Germany, Bohemia and England. But the particular geographical circumstances of the latter country made it possible for a new traditional revival, giving rise to what has rightly been termed the Elizabethan Renaissance, in which the Italian hermeticist and Neoplatonist Giordano Bruno also played a part; he was a great proponent of the Art of Memory, which is based on the mnemonic power of visual symbols and was widely used during the Renaissance. Bruno resided in England for several years, and to him we owe such important works as **De umbris idearum**, **De causa, principio et uno**, **De heroicis furoribus**, **De innumerabilibus, immenso et infigurabilibus**, **De infinito, universo et mundis**, **Expulsio bestiae triumphantis**, **Cena cineris**, etc. Indeed, under the reign of Elizabeth I, which spanned from 1558 to 1603, ancient Albion experienced its greatest cultural heyday, a period in which hermetic concepts certainly exerted a notable influence. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that in the England of that era, certain currents of Templar and chivalric Christianity persisted, continuing to keep alive the ancient medieval ideal of the Christian Empire, embodied there in the mythical figure of King Arthur and his twelve knights of the 'Round Table', whose legend is also rooted in ancient Celtic traditions. Thus, the favourable conditions prevailing in England at that time and its resolute opposition to the almost exclusively temporal power into which the Catholic Church had fallen were decisive factors in the powerful revival of this idea of an imperial monarchy. The doctrinal foundation upon which such a monarchy would rest would be none other than Hermeticism and Christian Kabbalah.

On the other hand, and from the perspective we are adopting here, it matters little that the long-awaited universal reform was not fully realised, as its promoters had hoped. Far from having been in vain, that attempt gave rise to a whole host of writers, poets, artists and scientists deeply interested in Sacred Science. One need only recall Shakespeare, whose plays revealed a worldview rooted in Hermetic and Christian Kabbalistic cosmogony, particularly in *The Tempest* and others. Nor should we forget Edmund Spenser and his epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, intensely imbued with Hermetic Neoplatonism and clearly alluding to the reforming role of the Tudor monarchy. But

The key figure of the Elizabethan Renaissance is undoubtedly John Dee, to such an extent that it is impossible to understand this period of Western esoteric history without taking into account this English scholar, who is said to have possessed an enormous library covering all branches of hermetic knowledge. A renowned mathematician, Dee developed his conception of the cosmos based entirely on the harmonic proportions of numbers and geometry, in complete agreement with the teachings of Reuchlin, Giorgi, Agrippa and even Dürer, from whom Dee drew his theory regarding these proportions in the human body. He poured the essence of his thought into what appears to be his seminal work, the *Monas Hieroglyphica*, that is, the figure, engraving or sacred symbol (hieroglyph) representing the Monad or Supreme Unity. Essentially, the *Monas Hieroglyphica* explains how the Being unfolds, and is immanent, in the three worlds, which in turn, and taken as a whole, form a 'mathematical, magical, kabbalistic and anagogical' image, through which it is possible to ascend towards the contemplation of Unity itself, of its transcendence. Indeed, it is through Pythagorean mathematics, magic, Kabbalah and anagogia (the search for and interpretation of the metaphysical meaning contained within the Holy Scriptures) that the fertile mystery of existence is revealed in all its fullness and majesty. For Dee, in the elemental world divine laws are expressed through mathematical science understood as applied technology; in the intermediate world, these laws govern astrological and astral cycles; and in the spiritual world they manifest as angelic energies. Dee was also no stranger to Alchemy, particularly that bequeathed by Agrippa, which, as we know, is linked to Christian Kabbalah. In Dee's work, Alchemy and Kabbalah become a magical-theurgical system, whose primary aim is direct communication with the angels, through the power of invocation and prayer.

In this sense, Dee develops a 'practical' form of Kabbalah, which is in reality a Christianised form of angelic magic based on the knowledge of divine names and the principles of Hermetic cosmology and metaphysics, and therefore has nothing to do with 'practical Kabbalah' nor with the 'ceremonial magic' practised by occultists of the 19th and 20th centuries, which arose from a gross confusion between the psychic and the spiritual. During the Elizabethan period, Dee became one of the principal inspirers of the political-hermetic movement that was to lead to the new imperial order, at the head of which Queen Elizabeth I herself would stand. It is in this light that we must view the series of journeys Dee undertook to various courts in Central Europe, where, whilst spreading the message of the Christian monarchy, he established fruitful contacts with the Hermetic-Kabbalistic circles existing there. For example, he resided for some time at the court of Emperor Rudolf II of Bohemia, who always surrounded himself with Kabbalist and Hermetic scholars, and in whose service the physician-chemist Michael Maier was employed.

Significantly, during the years Dee spent on the continent (from 1583 to 1590), the Rosicrucian Hermetic movement was taking shape, a movement that would play such a prominent role in the first half of the 17th century.

88 NOTE: LEARNED IGNORANCE OR IGNORANT LEARNING?

As has rightly been said, there is a great difference between 'learned

'ignorance', a term coined by Nicholas of Cusa to explain those states so aptly described by 'negative theology'; and another, namely simple, general ignorance, which, by its very nature, lends itself to complicity with success, or to hypocritical official approval, or to whatever fashion and the market demand. Both are inverted, at the extremes of the spectrum, and the beings who embody these realities are opposites; the former experience not knowing, the latter, the ignorant 'doctors', know nothing of knowledge and therefore believe that others do not know either, and this enables them to feign knowledge.

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The body of Renaissance Hermetic philosophy found its ultimate expression in what has come to be known as the Rosicrucian movement, to which Robert Fludd, Michael Maier, Valentin Andrae, Heinrich Khunrath and Comenius, amongst others, belonged. As we have said, this movement emerged in the early 17th century, specifically in the countries where John Dee had spread the message of universal reform, based on the doctrinal tenets of alchemical and Kabbalistic-Christian Hermeticism, of which the German theosophist Jacob Boehme (1575–1624) is also an heir; he had to struggle all his life, like so many other hermetic masters, against religious intolerance, even experiencing the bitterness of imprisonment for a time. In his works – chiefly *The Dawning Aurora*, *De Signatura Rerum* and *Mysterium Magnum* – Boehme sets out with fiery eloquence the stages through which man can recover his ‘body of light’ prior to the Fall of Adam, being born as a son of Eternal Wisdom.

The Rosicrucian movement gained momentum following the publication of the manifestos entitled *Fama Fraternitatis* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*, whose authorship, directly or indirectly, belonged to the mysterious ‘Invisible College of the Rose-Cross’, from which the Rosicrucians derived their very name. Given its importance for understanding the subtle history of the period under consideration, it is worth pausing for a moment to examine the content of these manifestos, and especially the events surrounding the legendary founder of this initiatory Fraternity: Christian Rosenkreutz (literally, Christian of the Rose-Cross). Firstly, we should note that this name is symbolic, as it does not refer to a specific individual, but rather to a ‘collective entity’ that fulfilled a traditional role during a particular period. It is said that the ‘life’ of Christian Rosenkreutz bridges the 14th and 15th centuries, that is to say, the period when the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance was taking shape, with all that this entailed in terms of readapting traditional principles to new historical and cyclical conditions. As we already know, one of the organisations that held initiatory and esoteric knowledge in the Middle Ages was the Order of the Temple. The bloody demise of the Templars at the beginning of the 14th century, in 1314 as we have already mentioned, led to a eventual severing of that link, resulting in the West’s loss of an essential part of its own traditional wisdom; for in truth, the East designates nothing other than the symbolic region where the Supreme and primordial Centre resides, the source of all metaphysical and spiritual knowledge. In this sense, the ‘journeys’ undertaken by Christian Rosenkreutz through various countries of the East (during which he ‘received the secrets of magic and the Kabbalah’) were aimed at re-establishing the severed link, so that the West might continue regular communication with the Supreme Centre. On his return to Europe, Christian Rosenkreutz founded the ‘Brotherhood of the Rose-Cross’, of Hermetic-Christian nature, which, unlike its Templar predecessors, did not maintain an external organisation, but remained entirely anonymous, operating on a strictly spiritual and invisible plane; hence the name ‘Invisible College’.

It is thus possible to understand who the true ‘inspirers’ were of virtually all the esoteric movements that emerged during the Renaissance, movements whose hermetic-Christian nature leaves no room for doubt. The fact that the Rosicrucian manifestos were made public in the early 17th century indicated that the time had come to take much more direct action, as the adverse conditions prevailing in the West at that time demanded it. Thus, motivated by these manifestos, a group of hermetic adherents came together to form the Rosicrucian movement, which served as a sort of external arm—though with no apparent connection—to the ‘Invisible College of the Rose-Cross’. This movement also had a political-religious scope, as it sought to organise a state similar to that which existed in medieval Christendom: the Holy Roman Empire. Undoubtedly, the plans of John Dee and the Elizabethan reformers to re-establish a Christian monarchy of universal scope paved the way for such an undertaking, led by the Rhenish prince Frederick V of the Palatinate. This small principality in central Europe was, during the second decade of the 17th century, a veritable ‘Rosicrucian State’, where almost all the hermetic currents of the late Renaissance converged. The universities of Heidelberg and Oppenheim became centres of learning that propagated occult philosophy, thus generating a culture that left its mark on numerous architectural, scientific, artistic and literary works. In this climate of extraordinary and fertile creativity across all fields of knowledge, we find the engineer and architect Salomon de Caus, who designed magical and symbolic gardens and monuments, drawing on the laws of perspective, the proportions and harmonies of numbers, geometry and music. We also find the publishers Teodoro de Bry and Mateo Merian, who printed and produced the emblems and engravings for *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* by Valentin Andreae; the various volumes of Fludd’s *Metaphysical History of the Macrocosm and Microcosm*, and Maier’s *Atalanta Fugitiva*, to name but a few.

Let us also recall Khunrath’s alchemical-kabbalistic engravings in his work *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom*, and especially the one entitled ‘The Cave of the Enlightened’, where the treasures of Rosicrucian philosophy were preserved, inheriting the thought of Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin, Agrippa, Giorgi, Postel, Paracelsus and Dee, principally, although for the sake of brevity we omit numerous other adepts of Hermetic Art and Science. Let us say that the use of the engraving technique to visually present the ideas contained in the Hermetic books was not only a means of embellishing them aesthetically, but also of providing a sequence of ordered images that would facilitate the awakening of the reader’s intellectual (spiritual) intuition; in other words, they performed a didactic function suited to conveying Knowledge. The disappearance of the Rosicrucian movement led to an increasingly rationalist conception of scientific knowledge, which would irreversibly culminate in the positivist consolidation of the nineteenth century; this marked a low point in the cyclical descent into degradation, thus giving way to our present age of complete chaos and dissolution in all spheres of existence.

As we already know, the precession of the equinoxes (25,920 years) is the fundamental cyclical number, for it is on the basis of this and its subdivisions that the different periods of humanity are organised and structured (see Module II, sections 43 and 67). The principal of these subdivisions is precisely half the precession, that is, 12,960 years (13,000 in round figures), a time module known to all the peoples of antiquity, some of whom, such as the Chaldeans and the Greeks, gave it the name 'great year', thereby implying that it is a complete cycle in itself. In the Hindu tradition, five of these 'great years' also constitute the *Manvantara* ($5 \times 12,960 = 64,800$), which adds a new perspective to our studies.

The biblical Flood actually refers to a great cataclysm that occurred precisely 12,960 years ago, which, among other consequences, led to the disappearance of the Atlantean continent (Atlantis, the mythical 'Isle of the West') and the civilisation that developed within it—a civilisation in which there existed a spiritual centre directly emanating from the Primordial Tradition. That cataclysm marked the transition from the fourth 'great year' to the fifth, at the end of which we currently find ourselves, thus coinciding with the end of *the Manvantara*. Numerous traditions have preserved the memory of that civilisation, and many of them have regarded themselves as its heirs, such as the Hermetic Tradition and all those that, throughout the last 'great year', have inhabited the western coast of Europe, the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East, and of course the cultures of pre-Columbian America. Let us recall that Plato himself speaks of Atlantis in two of his 'Dialogues': the *Timaeus* and the *Critias*.

If we bear in mind that this cataclysm, according to traditional accounts, took place around 11,000 BC, and if we assign a geological catastrophe to the end of each 'great year'—following the scholar Gastón Georgel in this regard—the previous one occurred around 24,000 BC, thus marking the transition from the third 'great year' to the fourth. It is said that this cataclysm caused the break-up of a vast continent (known as Gondwana) situated in the southernmost regions of the Earth. It is quite likely that the civilisation which flourished on that continent gave rise to all those traditions that developed mainly in Africa and Australia.

Around 37,000 BC, we have the transition from the second 'great year' to the third, marked by a cataclysm that primarily affected the peoples inhabiting another vast continent situated in the far eastern regions, the remnants of which would form all those thousands of islands now scattered across Southeast Asia and much of the Pacific. As for the transition from the first 'great year' to the second, little is known of the cataclysm that marked it, although its date, 50,000 BC, coincides with that which modern science assigns to the first glaciation, when the Hyperborean regions, which until then had enjoyed an 'eternal spring', were covered in ice. It is interesting to note that in the succession of the four ages of humanity, the first two 'great years' (from 63,000 to 37,000 BC) belong entirely to the Golden Age, which, as we know, covers a complete cycle of the precession of the equinoxes ($2 \times 12,920 = 25,920$ years), indicating that within that Age we must also distinguish

two distinct periods, although for that primitive humanity there existed only one single Tradition.

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AGARTHA

Throughout this Programme we have referred many times to Agartha in various forms, and we believe it appropriate to offer some clarifications regarding this invisible country, this territory that cannot be located spatially – yet which does indeed exist in the invisible realm and which every human being can find within themselves through an orderly and gradual process – from which this introductory manual to the symbols and traditional doctrine has taken its name. René Guénon, the most important esotericist of the 20th century, referring to Agartha, said:

"We have previously spoken of allusions made by every tradition to something that is lost or hidden, and which is represented by various symbols; this, when taken in its general sense – that which concerns the whole of terrestrial humanity – relates precisely to the conditions of *the Kali-Yuga*. The present period is therefore a period of obscurity and confusion; its conditions are such that, so long as they persist, initiatory knowledge must necessarily remain hidden; hence the nature of the 'Mysteries' of so-called 'historical' antiquity (which does not even date back to the beginning of this period) and of the secret organisations of all peoples: organisations which provide effective initiation where a true traditional doctrine still survives, but which offer nothing more than its shadow when the spirit of this doctrine has ceased to animate the symbols, which are but its outward representation; and this is because, for various reasons, every conscious link with the spiritual centre of the world has ultimately been severed, which constitutes the most specific meaning of the loss of tradition, that which particularly concerns this or that secondary centre, which ceases to be in direct and effective relation with the supreme centre".

"We must therefore speak, as we said earlier, of something that is more hidden than truly lost, for it is not lost to everyone and some still possess it in its entirety; and, if that is the case, others always have the possibility of finding it again, provided they seek it as they ought, that is to say, that their intention is directed in such a way that, through the harmonic vibrations it awakens in accordance with the law of 'concordant actions and reactions', it may bring them into effective spiritual communication with the supreme centre". (*The King of the World*, Chapter VIII).

And he adds:

"It is always a region which, like the earthly paradise, becomes inaccessible to ordinary humanity, and which lies beyond the reach of all the cataclysms that disrupt the human world at the end of certain cyclical periods".

As for the introduction provided by the Agartha Programme, it relates fundamentally to Cosmogony as the immediate foundation of the Self and Metaphysics. In this regard, we have indicated certain initiatory paths for those who have an affinity with them, such as those related to

Mahayana Buddhism, *Zen* Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, etc., particularly for those who urgently require the communal exoteric rite, or religious emotion. We merely wish to warn students about certain sects that exist throughout the world; but we believe that after having followed the Programme, the reader will be able to distinguish the wheat from the chaff. However, this manual is aimed at the West and refers more particularly to the Hermetic Tradition. If any modern, international initiatory institution could claim the right to represent that Tradition, it is Freemasonry, which, although it has generally lost the meaning of the myths and rites it preserves—and which still remain alive in some of its lodges—is capable of transmitting the spiritual influence it represents. And indeed, the Christian Tradition is equally alive; its esotericism has given us most of the little we have, and through it we may also recover the much that we once possessed. In any case, we have insisted that the student of the Hermetic Tradition can work alone; though we have likewise emphasised that it is advisable to align oneself with a Traditional form when one realises the grave responsibility placed upon our frail shoulders, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the inappropriateness of feeding our egos. An Islamic saying asserts that at the beginning of a cycle, the apprentice is required to possess knowledge of at least nine-tenths of the whole, but that in recent times, with just one-tenth, one may be saved—which is certainly comforting for us, the ignorant of today—and which, moreover, must be related to the Christian Gospel, which affirms that by the end of this cycle, even children themselves will be able to see and be transfigured in the eternal light, which undoubtedly constitutes immense hope for our children as well. Bearing in mind that this Programme of Introduction to Sacred Science is far more for those who are disillusioned with their illusions than for the deluded.

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CONTEMPORARY ESOTERISM

The presence of the Hermetic Tradition would not come to an end with the disappearance of the Rosicrucian movement in the mid-17th century, but its influence would continue to be decisive in all those esoteric and initiatory currents that would emerge throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, as is the case, for example, with modern Freemasonry. In truth, the spiritual energy of the God who is Threefold in His Wisdom has never ceased to manifest itself in the West to this day, although there have been times when, due to the difficulties of a profane and desecralised environment, this influence has only enriched the hearts of a few; yet it is these very individuals who have made possible the continuity of the transmission of Sacred Science, adapting it to the mindset of their contemporaries and to the special circumstances of this end of cycle. This is the case of René Guénon (1886–1951), considered, as has already been said, the greatest metaphysician and esotericist of the 20th century, whose work represents the most complete synthesis of traditional doctrine achieved in our time and in this part of the world, and which has also been decisive in validating studies and research on symbols regarded as the vehicles of Knowledge, in this sense, its author acting as a true Hermeticist, for the revival of symbols, bearers of the ideas of Perennial Wisdom, has always been one of the most important functions of

Hermetic masters throughout all time and place. A work that has certainly served, and will continue to serve, as an intellectual guide to numerous men and women seeking their inner fulfilment through deepening their understanding of the Symbolic Path, which is precisely one of the forms taken by contemporary esotericism in the West today, and therefore the Hermetic Tradition, encompassing all those disciplines that refer directly to Cosmogony and Ontology—that is, to the knowledge of the Self and the various planes of its manifestation—the sum of which comprises the entirety of what was formerly called the ‘lesser Mysteries’. But these, far from representing the entirety of Knowledge, constitute merely a foundation (albeit an indispensable one) for accessing the ‘Greater Mysteries’, that is to say Metaphysics, whose general principles were also expounded by Guénon, and which would complete, crowning them, his studies on Sacred Science.

Let us recall that Metaphysics refers to everything that lies beyond the cosmic edifice, and even beyond its creative principle—which is none other than Being—concerning itself exclusively with the transcendent knowledge of Non-Being. Being, the One, is the Non-Being affirmed, and therefore already represents a first determination; although this is the most primordial of all, it is nevertheless conditioned in relation to those other possibilities—truly infinite—which will never manifest due to their ineffable and unconditioned nature, and which belong entirely to Non-Being, which consequently contains both that which will be manifested through Being and that which will never manifest. Thus, distinguishing between Being and Non-Being, between *Kether* and *En Sof*, is essential for those who embark upon the path of true Gnosis, who must always have as their permanent reference the supra-cosmic and the most universal ideas and principles, even if they are only just beginning that path and still have to complete their first alchemical transmutations. Or perhaps it is precisely for this reason that they must recognise and understand this difference from the outset, thereby avoiding subsequent confusion that would prevent them from transcending the conditions that bind them to their individual and contingent state.

The same can be said of the confusion between metaphysics and religion, which is another of the issues that Guénon always sought to clarify, as our Programme has also done on several occasions (see in particular Module II, [74](#)). This confusion is quite common nowadays, even amongst some of those who have drawn upon Guénon’s work, which they have, for this very reason, distorted, if not simply manipulated and betrayed. It is necessary to draw a clear distinction between the metaphysical and the religious perspective, among other reasons because the latter is always limited to the most external aspects, prioritising the sentimental and devotional element over what is truly intellectual and spiritual; consequently, this perspective does not even contemplate the idea of a Cosmogony, and consequently the possibility of initiation into the mysteries of life and the Self, the antechamber to the great mysteries of Metaphysics. Confusing the metaphysical with the religious entails a complete reversal of the hierarchical relationships between the exoteric and the esoteric, and even more so between the psychic and the spiritual.

In this regard, and to conclude, here is what Guénon himself says on the matter: “Metaphysics and religion are not, and never will be, on the same plane; it follows, moreover, that a purely metaphysical doctrine

and a religious doctrine cannot compete or come into conflict, since their domains are clearly distinct.” (*East and West*, Part 2, Chapter IV). And likewise: “To claim that initiation could have arisen from religion [...] is to invert all the normal relationships that result from the very nature of things; and esotericism is truly, in relation to religious exotericism, what the spirit is in relation to the body, so much so that, when a religion has lost all point of contact with esotericism, there remains in it nothing but ‘dead letter’ and misunderstood formalism, for what gave it life was effective communication with the spiritual centre of the world, and this can only be established and maintained consciously through esotericism and the presence of a true initiatory organisation.” (*Appreciations on Initiation*, Chapter XI).

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END OF CYCLE

The speed at which world events unfold, and the growing sense of instability that stems from this, is one of the defining features of the end of the cycle we are currently experiencing. Time is on the verge of running out due to its own acceleration, which has resulted in humanity being further removed today than ever before from its Source. In this sense, it could be said that cyclical and temporal development entails a gradual and progressive distancing from the essential pole of manifestation, which is primordial Unity, and conversely, an increasingly progressive descent into the substantial pole, to which the realm of quantity and multiplicity belongs. By analogy with this, such a distancing has also caused human beings to gradually lose awareness of their higher realities, ultimately leading them to develop that which is most inferior and superficial within them. This is the general trend, the one that sets the tone for our terminal age, regarded as the darkest phase of the ‘Dark Age’ (the *Kali-Yuga* or Iron Age), and which for that very reason takes on an anomalous and inverted character compared to what has been the history of humanity in earlier, and not too distant, times.

In one way or another, almost all traditions have mentioned in their prophecies and sacred texts the characteristics that the end of the cycle will take on, and which correspond even in the details to what we are currently experiencing. Yet above the horrors and sorrows brought by the signs of this age, the hope of a truly new world opens up for all men and women of upright heart, where “there shall be no more night, nor shall there be any need of the light of a lamp or the light of the sun”, for the wheel will have ceased to turn and time will have been absorbed into the Reality of its immutable centre.

“When deceit, falsehood, inertia, slumber, wickedness, consternation, affliction, confusion, fear and sorrow reign: this is called the *Kali Yuga*, which is dark.” *Bhagavata Purana*, Book XIII.

“In the *Kali Yuga*, wealth among men will far outweigh nobility of birth, virtue, and merit; right and rule will be determined by force.” *Ibid*.

"... now there is a race of iron. Never during the day will they be free from toil and misery, nor will they cease to be consumed during the night, and the gods will bring upon them harsh troubles (...). The father will not resemble his children, nor the children their father; the host will not cherish his guest, nor the friend his friend, and brothers will not love one another as before. They will despise their parents as soon as they grow old and will insult them with harsh words, cruelly, without heeding the watchful eye of the gods (...). There will be no recognition for those who keep their word, nor for the just and the honourable; rather, they will hold the evildoer and the violent man in higher regard. Justice will lie in the strength of one's hands, and there will be no modesty; the wicked will seek to harm the most virtuous man with twisted speeches and will also resort to oaths. Murmuring envy, delighting in evil and repugnant, will accompany all wretched men." Hesiod, *Works and Days*, verses 174–195.

"See that no one deceives you, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah,' and they will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but do not be alarmed, for this must take place, though the end is not yet. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. But these are the beginning of birth pangs (...) Then many will be scandalised, and they will betray one another and hate one another; and many false prophets will arise, and because of the increase of wickedness, the love of many will grow cold; but whoever endures to the end will be saved." Matthew XXIV, 4-13.

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ALCHEMY: REMINISCENCE

Reminiscence is to remember the Origin and thereby to penetrate the Eternal Present. Thus, reminiscence actualises what has always been, that is, what is (and what gives being), and the knowledge of another multidimensional reality and the space in which it occurs. It is also to realise that in that other realm one comprehends – albeit dimly – the presence of a vast chain of testimony, stretching back to the origins, including gods, heroes, or incredible figures who have transmitted these energies, which are received through alchemical operations; they always manifest through the duality of opposites, *solve-coagula*, dissolving and coagulating, thanks to the fire of the heart that presides over the entire Work, and always converge in the Present, which is what grants true mastery to the Adepts of Knowledge.

Anamnesis, that is, Remembrance, takes on many forms that resolve into reminiscences. *Déjà vu* is one of them, as is the recovery of identity that entails entering a different plane by unveiling the Power, superior to the sum of all acts. Antiquity, the land of the ancestors, is now. What some civilisations called the realm of the dead is the current subject of the Work and indicates that the nigredo has been assimilated. Then the Adept leaves mourning behind and dons a new garment characterised by permanence, whether he is clothed in serene joy, or plunged into the sacrificial agony of repeated suicide, or alternating between both states.

Whoever crosses the threshold silently guards the Secret of something that is revealed

in their consciousness, yet does not manifest in the ordinary way. Welcome to Certainty and the Great Mysteries.

All this has already happened. The end of the world has already come.

End of Module III

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INTRODUCTION TO SACRED SCIENCE

Agartha Programme

Federico González
and collaborators

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Agartha Programme

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